



THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT FATIMA

THE SECRET AND THE CHURCH

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**THE WHOLE TRUTH
ABOUT FATIMA**

**VOLUME II
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(1917-1942)**

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INTRODUCTION

AT THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE: THE GREAT SECRET OF JULY 13, 1917

In July of 1967, in an article pretending to have some critical value, Father Rouquette dared to write these stupefying lines: «However, what are we to say about the famous “miracle” of the sun (sic) of October 13, 1917? A good number of direct statements by the witnesses leave no doubt: several hundred people were persuaded that they had seen the sun dance upon itself...» No, good Father! To speak of only “several hundred people” to express the presence of at least fifty thousand witnesses is not a legitimate use of understatement, a rhetorical device so dear to the ancients, it is simply a bold-faced lie, unless one is completely ignorant of the event! But, moving right along, let us examine only one curious objection which is of interest: «Moreover (continues the editor of the theological journal *Etudes*), an authentic miracle always has a precise, final cause; it is the confirmation of a dogmatic truth. Now the phenomenon of October 13 seems gratuitous, there does not seem to be any reason for it; it seems as though God is simply playing with the physiological laws of human vision.»¹

FROM THE MIRACLE TO THE MESSAGE

What unbelievable blindness! Is our theologian unaware that since May 13, the Virgin Mary had appeared six times to the three shepherds, and had spoken to them on each of these visits? Clearly, the “dance of the sun” was intended to provide a striking, incomparable, heavenly proof of the Message’s authenticity, as well as its extraordinary importance in the designs of Divine Providence. The revelation of the Message and the accomplishment of the great Miracle, prophesied three months in advance, correspond with each other and mutually shed light on each other. If the miracle is indeed the guarantee of the divine authenticity of the Message, the latter confers on the Miracle its whole significance as a supernatural Sign.

On June 14, 1917, after having questioned the three seers, the parish priest of Fatima was astonished: «It is not possible (he said) for Our Lady to come from Heaven to the earth simply to tell us to recite the Rosary every day. Besides, the

custom is well-nigh universal in the parish...»² This is what disturbed Father Ferreira. At the time, he had some excuses: having heard only a few isolated words of the message, he could not perceive the real importance of the events. Subsequent events showed in a striking manner that *there is no disproportion in the mystery of Fatima*. The wonderful “dance of the sun”, an event unprecedented in the entire history of humanity, is exactly proportioned to the unique grandeur and far-reaching implications of the Message of the Queen of Heaven.

As early as 1942, Cardinal Cerejeira, the Patriarch of Lisbon, had observed: «From the very first hour, the fervour increases, the miracle augments, the mystery develops... Fatima speaks not only to Portugal, but to the entire world.»³

AT THE VERY HEART OF THE MESSAGE: THE SECRET

One might ask: “What, then, is the essence of the Message?” The Message, of course, consists first of all in the words of the Angel, as well as those of the Blessed Virgin in each of Her appearances from May 13 to October 13, 1917. As we have already seen, they are so rich in significance and so salutary for our souls!

However, for one who studies Fatima as a whole, and considers its implications in the light of history, the text of paramount, decisive importance is clearly the famous Secret revealed by Our Lady on July 13, 1917. This does not sit well with contemporary writers, who seek at any cost to dispute its authenticity, or minimize its implications. Whether we are talking about highly placed Church authorities or reform-minded theologians, the Secret of Fatima disturbs them, irritates them, scandalizes them. This is the reason almost all of them are obstinate in trying to hide it under a bushel. This is true not only of the third part, still not revealed by Rome, but even the first two parts as well, concerning which they maintain a tenacious conspiracy of silence. In short, they would like to pass the Secret off as something of secondary importance, utterly non-essential.

Their efforts are in vain. For in the eyes of the average person, as well as in actuality, Fatima consists first of all in its great Secret... because the Blessed Virgin wanted it this way. We will see more and more clearly that this text stands out as the central core, the heart of the Message of Fatima. It is the central point, from which the light comes beaming out everywhere, the point of convergence

for everything Our Lady came to teach us at the Cova da Iria. Everything flows from it, and everything relates back to it. It is the summary, the synthesis of the message, coming from the very mouth of the Blessed Virgin.

OUR TASK: TO COMMENT ON AND EXPLAIN THE SECRET

Our task, then, is simple: with all childlike docility, with immense respect and painstaking attention, we must scrutinize and meditate on the heavenly words. We need not fear attributing too much importance to these words, secure in the knowledge that the Blessed Virgin is speaking to us, for our own salvation and for the entire world's as well. Hence we will follow this great text step by step, contenting ourselves with commenting on it and explaining it. It will fill us with admiration as it unveils, little by little, the salutary and profound mystery of Fatima. The Secret itself, by its profundity, coherence, and richness of content, bears the mark of its incontestably divine origin. For as we will see at the end of our investigation, the mystical, theological, and prophetic contents of the Secret are alone sufficient proof that no human mind could have invented such a text.

A UNIQUE AND THREEFOLD SECRET. Later on we will retrace the historical circumstances of its writing down, and the drama of its publication, which has been interminably delayed. Now, however, we must indicate its structure, since this will serve as the framework for our own exposition.

«The Secret (Sister Lucy writes in her Third Memoir) is composed of three distinct parts, and I shall reveal two of them. The first was the vision of hell... The second concerns devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»⁴ The third part undoubtedly adds a new element. In reference to this text, it might be helpful to point out that the first part of the Secret is generally identified with the vision of hell, the second part with the prophetic words of Our Lady revealed in 1942, and the third part has not yet been revealed.

More importantly, we stress that there is *one unique Secret*, revealed in its entirety by Our Lady in the apparition of July 13, 1917. *It forms a coherent whole*, the parts of which are very tightly joined together. Is it not remarkable that in the manuscript of her Third Memoir, Sister Lucy wrote the whole thing out, from the beginning which contains the description of hell, to the conclusion, “and a certain period of peace will be given to the world”, without marking a single division in the text?⁵

Basing ourselves on this fundamental unity and on the fact that Sister Lucy herself did not firmly indicate the precise plan of the Secret, we will adopt the distinction that in our opinion brings out most clearly its three essential themes, the logical development of the whole, and its perfectly balanced construction in spite of its baffling appearance. To this point we shall return in some detail.

Thus we will divide the great Secret into three parts and a conclusion, which are all interlinked by a close connection and interdependence. The first part concerns the salvation of souls, the central idea of the second is the salvation of the nations and of Christendom, the peace of the world, while the third part undoubtedly deals with the preservation of the Catholic Faith and the salvation of the Church. These three themes, which are joined by an indissoluble bond, reveal to us the extraordinary mystical, moral, political, ecclesial, and dogmatic implications of the Secret of Fatima.

Before commenting on it step by step, let us read once more this incomparable text, adding in subtitles corresponding to the various stages of our explanation, for the fundamental basis of these subtitles have a solid justification in reality, as we will also show.

FIRST PART: HEAVEN OR HELL! THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF SOULS.

«As She said these last words, Our Lady parted Her hands as She had done the two previous months. The reflection of the light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw what seemed to be an ocean of fire ...»

At this point follows *the description of hell*. Is it not logical to believe that the words of Our Lady, commenting immediately after this vision, and proposing a supernatural lesson from it, belong to the first theme of the Secret, to its “first part”?

«Terrified, and as if to plead for succour (Lucy continues), we looked up at Our Lady, who said to us, so kindly and so sadly:

«You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.

«If My requests are heeded, many souls will be saved and there will be

peace...»

Here, the dominant idea is that of the salvation of souls. Right at the outset, this first part introduces us to the heart of the drama of our own life: Heaven or hell, for all eternity! And what must we do here below to avoid the one and merit the other? This is the most poignant danger, the most convincing moral exhortation, the most compelling appeal of mystical theology.

The hidden and heroic life of the three seers : — their almost obsessive concern with praying and sacrificing themselves to save the souls of : sinners from hell, their vehement desire to go speedily to Heaven — this along with the holy _ death of Francisco and Jacinta will be the best : commentary on the first part of the Secret, which all three lived so intensely.

SECOND PART: GULAG OR CHRISTENDOM! THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF THE WORLD.

«If My requests are heeded (Our Lady continued), many souls will be saved and there will be peace.

«The war will end. But if men do not cease offending God, another worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI.

«When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign given you by God that He is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions against the Church and the Holy Father.

«To prevent this, I will come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of the month.

«If My requests are granted. Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, raising up wars and persecutions against the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated.»

Here, the Secret takes on a political and prophetic tone, where promises and chastisements are mentioned and specified in their turn, depending on whether

men obey the requests of Our Lady or not. It is the marvellous, but also terrible and dramatic exposition of the great design of mercy offered by God to the world in 1917, for our century, for the peace of the world and the rebirth of Christendom.

Using this second part of the Secret, so packed with significance, we will find the thread connecting the events of the religious and political drama of 1917 to our own time, our own era burning with significance, in this year 1989...

THIRD PART: THE FINAL SECRET... THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF THE CHURCH

«In Portugal, the dogma of faith will always be preserved, etc. (sic).»

Although the third part of the Secret has not been divulged, we can nevertheless make extremely probable conjectures about its essential contents. In this complex and detailed study of all the evidence, we have a sure guide: Father , Alonso, who was the official expert of Fatima. At issue is the very salvation of the Church in the frightful crisis it has suffered since 1960, and the means of its miraculous restoration. This new stage in the history of our current era, even sadder than the preceding one, will be the subject of Volume III.

CONCLUSION OF THE ENTIRE SECRET: THE UNIVERSAL TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

«In the end (Our Lady concludes), My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, which will be converted, and some time of peace will be granted to the world.

«Tell the Secret to no one. Francisco, yes, you may tell him.»

The Secret ends, then, with the prophecy of a wonderful future for the Church and Christendom, which Our Lady announced to us in all certitude: it must inevitably come, regardless of what comes before. What mercy! Here is the source of our invincible and immense hope. «In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph»: we have only these words to guide us as a star, in this night which grows ever darker. *Ave! Maris Stella!*

THE SECRET OF THE SECRET: THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, OUR FINAL SALVATION

The secret of the Secret, the soul of each one of the parts of this text, as we will discover to our wonderment, is the revelation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the sovereign remedy for all our evils, the final and unique salvation of our souls, our nations, and all Christendom, as well as the Roman Church herself. Such is the Holy Trinity's unfathomable design of infinite Mercy, which wishes to give us everything through the mediation of this Heart, which is so good, so holy and Immaculate.

Let us state right away the conclusion in which our long exposition shall end: with the passage of time, as its prophecies are fulfilled each day, the great Secret of Fatima manifests its immense importance more and more. It opens a veritable new era in the history of the Church. These words are not an exaggeration. For there is no question of a "*Reform*", a capricious dream of men full of themselves and their own work, but a sovereign and irrevocable decision of Divine Providence, revealed to the Church by Our Lady of Fatima: «God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»

Cardinal Cerejeira said, rightly: «We believe that the apparitions of Fatima open *a new era*: that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»⁶ When it is revealed in all its fullness, the great Secret of Fatima will then be seen for what it really is: an unprecedented document in the entire history of the Church, a divine oracle without precedent, which by the transcendent heights of its heavenly origin dominates the history of our century, and surely future centuries as well.

Our part is to understand it, to rejoice in it while giving thanks to God, so *as to be penetrated with it and live it*. May Our Lady of Fatima, the Immaculate Mediatrix, deign to give us this signal favour!

Seat of Wisdom, pray for us!

**FIRST PART OF THE SECRET: HEAVEN OR HELL
THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF SOULS**

**SECTION I: Faced with the only evil, hell, the unique remedy, the
Immaculate Heart of Mary.**

CHAPTER I

«HELL EXISTS, AND WE COULD GO THERE»

The Secret of Fatima opens with the terrifying vision of hell. Through this vision, Our Lady reminds us right away of the essential, the only thing that counts: our eternity. This first part of the Secret is of primordial importance. Even more than the prediction of famines, wars and persecutions, this striking, anguished reminder of the eternity in hell which threatens us is one of the essential points of the message of Our Lady. This is one of the most important truths of our Catholic Faith which Our Lady of Fatima wished to recall to our apostate, naturalist and materialist century, which is blindly set on purely earthly horizons.

THE HORRIBLE VISION: ONLY TOO REAL

Once again, let us recall the terrible and realistic description which Sister Lucy traces for us in her Memoirs:⁷

«As Our Lady spoke these last words, She opened Her hands once more, as She had done during the two previous months. The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw as it were an ocean of fire.

«Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in a huge fire, without weight or equilibrium, and amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. (It must have been this sight which caused me to cry out, as people say they heard me.)

«The demons could be distinguished (from the souls of the damned) by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, all black and transparent.

«This vision lasted only a moment, thanks to our good Heavenly Mother who,

at the first apparition, had promised to take us to Heaven. Without this promise, I think we would have died of fright.»

HEAVEN OR HELL

There it is. And how frightening is the spectacle! Yet in this lies the whole drama of our human life. Clearly, before all else the Blessed Virgin wants us to consider the extremely serious character of our short life, which must lead us to Heaven or hell for all eternity. We know that it must be one or the other; there is no other possible outcome. In the brief years of our mortal life, our final destiny is decided, and decided irrevocably...

“COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER...” (Mt. 25:34) If by the grace of God we go to Heaven, introduced into the family of God, transformed and divinized by His glory and rejoicing in it, we will be happy for all times with an unspeakable joy. The Faith already lets us get a glimpse of this happiness which is promised to us, and for which we hope...

This will be the return of the Prodigal Son to the blessed bosom of His most loving Father. It will be the Heart of Jesus our Spouse and crucified Saviour, and His nuptial embrace. It will be the great banquet one-on-one, He present to us and we to Him, the hidden life for all eternity in the secret of His Face and the transforming fire of His Spirit of Love.

Heaven will be contemplation full of the joy of the beauties and glories of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Her maternal arms and Her smile. It will be the canticles of the praises of God by the myriads of angels and saints, and life in their sweet presence, as among so many brethren and friends. It will be, finally, the joy of being reunited with our dear loved ones, all gathered together at the table of the Father, for the wedding feast of the Lamb.

How could such a state of beatitude not be perfect, overflowing and ever renewed? For it is ever increasing, as one sees the happiness of so many other persons in Heaven who are loved with an immense love. According to our Catholic Faith, such is the divine felicity reserved to the elect. It is immense and it surpasses anything we can conceive, imagine or feel here below.⁸

“DEPART, YE CURSED, FAR FROM ME, INTO ETERNAL FIRE!” (Mt.

25:41) But if, freely, and through our own fault, we merit eternal chastisement, what a contrast! An eternity of frightful misery awaits us: tortures of the soul, tortures of the body, atrocious sufferings in our whole being, at every instant, without any respite and for all eternity, without any hope of deliverance, ever. Eternally cursed, rejected and far from God, deprived forever of His presence, and of all peace, and all joy, and delivered over forever into the blackest despair...

This is what is expressed in an incomparable manner, with a striking force of expression, although in very sober fashion – in Sister Lucy’s account. If accepted literally, it will profoundly stamp our minds with this fear of hell, so salutary and so profoundly Catholic.

But must it be accepted literally? Here is the whole question, and rare are those who dare to answer with a firm yes. The well-nigh universal objection against this vision is important; it is worth examining.

I. INADEQUATE AND MISLEADING IMAGES?

THE RATIONALIST OBJECTIONS

FATHER DHANIS: A CHILDISH VISION. «Many readers (the critic of Fatima wrote), no doubt ask themselves what must be thought of the description of hell given by Lucy. Let us respond, without hesitating that *we cannot imagine that it can be taken as a literal expression of reality...* In any case, the demons do not have “a terrifying and repellent likeness of frightful and unknown animals”; they do not even have human forms at all; once the soul is separated from the body it no longer has any “human form”, according to which they could appear as “transparent embers”; and this is enough to prove that we can attribute no more than a symbolic significance to the vision described by Lucy.»⁹ Also, we must «beware of taking literally what is meant to be taken otherwise».

We have seen how Father Dhanis tried to cast suspicion on the supernatural authenticity of the vision of hell.¹⁰ The most favourable hypothesis he suggests to explain it is that of a *childish vision*. Yes, although Heaven bent over backwards with condescension towards the three children, it could show them nothing more than... *childish images*: «If indeed (he writes), a supernatural agent wishes to give to children a vision to make them understand the horror of hell,

should it not communicate to them a representation of hell which is recognizable for them, and therefore a representation which more or less corresponds to images already seen or descriptions already heard? But in all probability the images or descriptions of hell known to our little children presented it as a great pool of fire filled with souls and demons. Therefore, are not the various traits described by Lucy in some way “required elements” of a vision of hell *given to these children?*»¹¹ In short, Father Dhanis explains to us, the “images of hell” proposed by Sister Lucy are all well and good for childish imaginations, but cannot speak to informed and intelligent adults.

FATHER SERTILLANGES: MYTHICAL AND MEDIEVAL

REPRESENTATIONS. It must be pointed out that our anti-Fatima author is far from being the only one to reject these images of hell, which are familiar to the whole Catholic tradition. Dhanis himself invokes the name of a theologian of repute, Father Sertillanges. Had the latter, already in 1930, adopted a similar position? «Hell is not a myth», our defender of the faith wrote back then. But, «what is true is that our imagination portrays it *under inevitably mythical forms*, and sometimes, it must be admitted, more than is reasonable, if we consider so many paintings inspired by the Divine Comedy of Dante.» He goes on to repudiate «the images of the Florentine school, the Gothic Cathedrals, Fra Angelico, Michelangelo, Tiepolo, Jean Goujon, and so many others», as so many medieval and therefore outdated images. «I take them for what they are: images, in other words, *symbolic figures*, which we must avoid taking literally, and *which today must be replaced, because they depart too much from the underlying reality, and are misleading.*»¹²

“REPRESENTATIONS IN IMAGE FORM” WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FAITH. Since this book was written, the idea has made the rounds to the point where it is almost universally accepted. Today, the catechisms themselves imbue our children with this profound disdain for the traditional imagery, supposedly too medieval. One need only open Pierres Vivantes, “Living Stones”, the new catechism imposed by the French bishops on all children. Among the very few lines devoted to the subject of hell, we find the following statement, presented as an established fact: «One must not confuse this suffering (caused by separation from God) *with imaginary representations which might have been made.*»¹³

What an astonishing affirmation! Indeed, in his fascinating commentary on this “Catechism for the Eighties”, our Father asks: «By whom, then, have these

“imaginary representations”, not to be confused with the faith of our bishops, been spread? By whom have these descriptions of horrors, designed to frighten poor human beings, been spread? BY JESUS CHRIST Himself!»¹⁴

IMAGES... FROM THE GOSPELS! As a matter of fact, regardless of what Father Sertillanges says, or what Father Dhanis says, these images are not medieval. They do not go back to Dante. Far from being the inspiration behind the Middle Ages, Dante was only, as has been said, the most eloquent and the last spokesman for them; and the sculptures of our Cathedrals were completed long before the *Divine Comedy* appeared! For centuries, St. Augustine and the other Fathers had set forth and explained the same images, quite simply because they go back to the words of Our Lord! Was not He the first to speak of *gehenna*, of its inextinguishable fire and of the worm which never dies, and threatened the reprobate with the «outer darkness, where there will be weeping, and the gnashing of teeth»? It was Saints Peter and John who depicted the demons as frightening and cruel beasts! So? Was it then Jesus, the Word of the Father and our gentle primordial Truth, and was it the Apostles who propagated these images «*which are misleading*», and «*which must today be replaced*»?

FROM A RATIONALIST APOLOGETIC TO THE MODERNIST HERESY

By the way, just what should the traditional imagery be replaced with? On this question our innovators are silent. Father Dhanis writes: «The pains of hell are not only the privation of the vision of God and the remorse of conscience, but the damned suffer other pains *which affect them in various ways and even in their relations with the exterior world.*»¹⁵ These are simply nothing more than tranquilizing, anesthetizing abstractions.

“HELL IS NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!” Once we enter this slippery slope of demythologization, our fall is rapid. What remains of the doctrine of eternal hell in *Pierres Vivantes*? This quintessential abstraction which really cannot alarm anybody: «When Christians speak of hell, they mean *the tragic situation* of those who have refused God, and put themselves voluntarily and definitively outside of His love.» And that is all! In vain does *Pierres Vivantes* insist: «It is truly a “hellish suffering” to be so separated from God», for this threat alone, without commentary or explanation, does nothing to put any fear into sinners! If hell is simply living without God, then, alas, millions of men can accommodate themselves to it; they even believe that in this theoretical and practical atheism

lies the condition of their happiness! In short, with this type of catechesis, the Catholic Faith is emptied of all its content: no longer is there any judgment, or divine chastisement, hell is no longer a place of horrible torments; it is simply (from the Christian point of view!) «a tragic situation».

When separated from the trauma-inducing “images”, fire, worms, darkness, the shouts and groans of the damned, hell becomes a very “bearable” reality, which any free man can envisage with serenity.

“HELL DOES NOT EXIST!” For that matter, once the principle of demythologization is admitted, there is no reason to stop at this stage. For a Hans Kung, for example, the very existence of hell and the eternity of its pains are myths from which we must be delivered. As for Satan and the legions of devils, the theologian of Tübingen sees only a «mythological representation», which passed «from Babylonian mythology into primitive Judaism, and from there, into the New Testament.»¹⁶

Under the fallacious pretext of abandoning medieval images, arbitrarily judged inadequate and outdated, our theologians have managed to empty this Truth of faith of all concrete representations, as well as the slightest real content. Yet, this truth is of capital importance; on it depends all the other elements of our religion. The most daring of them openly deny the eternity of the torments of hell, and even the torments themselves, and finally the very existence of life in the next world. In any case, what all of them have in practice is that they never preach hell to anybody anymore.

In such a context of growing apostasy, the vision of hell granted to the three seers of Fatima takes on a prophetic significance: Our Lady willed to forewarn us against this blindness, the most terrible blindness that can exist, because it leads straight to the abyss which it strives in vain to ignore.

II. AN AUTHENTIC, COMPLETELY ACCURATE VISION!

Granted, for our feeble human reason, which knows neither the sanctity of God, nor the true malice of sin, as well as for our poor heart and its spontaneous sentiments, often so strangely blinded, the existence and eternity of the torments of hell always remain a disconcerting mystery, an indemonstrable, incomprehensible truth. This is why, confronted with the terrible vision of

Fatima, we always have the very natural temptation to avoid it, explain it away, or even openly rebel against it. Yet it would be folly to let ourselves be carried away by this instinctive reaction. For the only question, the only one of supreme importance to us, *is to know if it is true that hell is really the way it is described to be.*

On this question, no doubt is possible, and that is what we will demonstrate, showing the ludicrous and arbitrary character of all objections by which various people have pretended to minimize its significance. Our demonstration shall consist of two points.

JESUS CHRIST DIED TO DELIVER US FROM HELL. First of all the vision of Fatima is the pure echo, the most faithful expression of the teaching of Jesus Himself. Yes, it must be stressed that *the vision of hell related by Sister Lucy is eminently evangelical.*¹⁷ For it cannot be denied that Jesus never ceased to teach and preach the doctrine of hell all His life, especially by His sorrowful Passion and Death on the Cross.

«What my human reason could not dare to conclude, Jesus with all His reasoning power as perfect man reflected on before me and understood; what my heart did not want to accept, His Heart, which had an infinitely human tenderness, consented to. How could I go on disputing, what could I say, what could I object, when the most beautiful of the children of men, the wisest, the most loving, the most generous, knew by Divine Knowledge what hell was, and intellectually accepted it? Not to want to believe what You have revealed to us, as terrible as it might be, would be to separate myself from You, O Word, O Christ, Master of perfect Wisdom!

«You were so sure of it, both by human and Divine Knowledge, that Your whole life was determined by it, without an obsession, but without any sort of distraction... Here is where the Christian mystery of eternal damnation begins. *A God became man, and this man set about preaching, and this man was delivered over to the tortures of the Passion and Death to save us from hell.*»

It must not be forgotten that the Mystery of the Redemption is at the same time the supreme mark of the infinite Love of God for men, and the most certain proof of the eternal damnation with which sinners are threatened:

«If I were tempted not to believe in Jesus Christ at all, because I could not believe in hell, *how much I would be obliged to believe in hell anyway, because Jesus Christ has proved its existence to me by the atrocious peril of His sorrowful Passion.*»¹⁸

JESUS SPEAKS TO US IN THE LANGUAGE OF TRUTH. A second point: these images so insistently employed by Our Lord, far from being remote approximations vaguely calling to mind the reality, appear to us, on the contrary, to be its most exact expression, to the point where one can say in all truth: «Hell is just that! It is at least that!» And let this be pointed out as well: after the horrible vision, Our Lady did not say to the three shepherds: “You have seen a symbol, an image of eternal damnation, which of course is quite different from the symbol, because damnation belongs to the purely spiritual order.” No, She simply said to them: «*You have seen hell*, where the souls of poor sinners go.» Hell is a real danger that threatens us! It is as concrete as it is frightful.¹⁹

What a lesson! The sufferings of hell, as well as the joys of Heaven are mysterious to human reason alone. The subject cannot be handled wisely without scrupulously following the teachings of the Gospel. The vision of Fatima calls to mind the urgent and eternal truth of these same teachings. In this domain where Faith is the sovereign Teacher, the supreme wisdom for human reason consists in bowing down humbly before these truths. We must understand that the images proposed to us by our Creator are surely much more true and exact than all the ideas that we can forge for ourselves, since it concerns the “beyond”, of which we have no experience.²⁰

Let us return therefore to the description of Sister Lucy, as we bring out all the richness of the vision, its evangelical character, its exact theological and even philosophical truth.

«WE SAW AS IT WERE AN OCEAN OF FIRE»

Just as in the Scriptures, hell is described as *a place*. It is precisely «the pool of fire and brimstone» mentioned on several occasions by the Apocalypse:²¹ «But as for the cowardly and unbelieving, and abominable and murderers, and fornicators and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars, their lot shall be in *the pool that burns with fire and brimstone*, which is the second death.» (Apoc. 21:8.)

Here is the first important affirmation, which sweeps away all arbitrary watering-down of the text, which might lull us to sleep in a false security: hell is not only a state, «the tragic situation» of those who refuse God. It is the place of chastisement, a place of eternal torments: «an ocean of fire».

Another observation, which struck the children into a sorrowful understanding: what they saw is an immense extension, «*an ocean*», «*a great sea of fire*» filled with the damned. If in the very text of the Secret Sister Lucy does not mention it explicitly, in her Memoirs she often insists on this aspect of the vision. Thus she reports the frequent exclamations of Jacinta, who was unceasingly afflicted with this thought: «So many go there! So many!» Or again: «So many people go to hell! So many!»²² We will see later that Sister Lucy herself did not cease to repeat the same thing, and her words resonate as so many cries of alarm: «Many are those who are damned.» «Many are lost.» «Souls go to hell in droves.»

But the vision of Fatima does not merely remind us that hell exists, and that it is filled with innumerable damned souls, it also teaches us – and with what realism! – the atrocious torments that they endure, and for eternity.

«*PLUNGED IN THIS FIRE... DEMONS AND DAMNED SOULS.*»

«*Plunged in this fire (Sister Lucy continues), were demons and souls in human form, like transparent, burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze.*»

“SOULS ... IN HUMAN FORM.” This last trait, far from creating a difficulty, as Father Dhanis claimed, on the contrary illustrates a profound philosophical truth. Even when temporarily separated from the body, the human soul is not a self-subsisting spirit. It is, and essentially remains, *the form of the body of which it was the life-principle*. Before long, at the final resurrection, it will once again take on the body, from which it was violently separated only for a short lapse of time. Even after death, a mysterious but very real bond subsists in some way between the soul and the body; and in its spiritual being the soul remains proportioned to the body.

In all truth, therefore, and not merely in a vaguely symbolic manner, God in His Omnipotence can even cause a human soul to appear under its proper individual corporeal form. In short, if a soul is to be depicted in a manner perceptible to the senses, it cannot do so in a more exact fashion than under the very figure of the

body which it once animated, and which, following the resurrection of the body, it will animate once more.

THE DEVILS: “TERRIFYING FORMS OF FRIGHTFUL ANIMALS.” «*The demons (Sister Lucy relates) could be distinguished (from the souls of the damned) by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, all black and transparent.*» Mythical symbols or medieval fantasies? No! The image, once again, comes from the Bible. It is the only image in creation willed by God to make us understand the unbearable hideousness of these fallen spirits, their malice and the atrocity of their presence, the terrible torments they make poor human beings endure. These are the terrible beasts of the Apocalypse who inhabit «the great furnace» of the infernal «abyss»,²³ the «great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns...»²⁴ As for Saint Peter, he compares the devil to «a roaring lion who goes about seeking someone to devour».²⁵

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CREATOR. Although it might be true that the symbolic representations invented by men through custom can at times be arbitrary, and perhaps vary according to the various civilizations that evolve with time, it is a gross error to believe that the same is true for the essential themes of biblical symbolism. We are forgetting that it is the Creator Himself Who through these images speaks to us.

When Our Lord tells us that hell is the eternal, inextinguishable fire, the worm which never dies, the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, it is the Word and Creator addressing us, the eternal Wisdom through Whom everything was made and by Whom everything subsists. If, avoiding all the vague and abstract formulas, He deliberately chooses to speak to us in this language which is so concrete, it is because this is the most accurate language: these terrifying realities were willed by Him in creation itself, to make us understand here below the mystery of eternal hell.

Likewise, when Saint Jude mentions the darkness and chains of an eternal prison,²⁶ when Saint John speaks of a second death, eternal death, a veritable unending agony, and the abyss which opens up in the centre of the earth over a pool of fire and sulfur,²⁷ when he describes the demons as frightful and cruel beasts, he appeals to *created realities which are, in their very being, a language, a divine word addressed to us to make us see in a concrete and accurate way the frightful torments reserved to the damned.*

Far from leaving us in ignorance about the beyond, in His immense goodness God willed certain creatures of His to see it already here, in all accuracy. There it was, with all the putrid miasms, the infectious pestilences, the hideous stench. There, too, were the ferocious, monstrous, unclean beasts, who awaken in us an instinctive fright. The Creator programmed this horror into us, that it might serve us as a motivation, a warning. Here, no doubt, is one of the most profound reasons for all the evils that God has created, willed or permitted in the world. In one of his *Pages of Mystical Theology*, our Father develops this idea at length. It is as important as it is little known.²⁸

A DEVOURING FIRE WHICH IS NEVER EXTINGUISHED

Above all else, there is the reality of the fire, expressly created by God to make us understand, through His Eyes as it were, the atrocity of the eternal chastisement. Nine times in a row, in the short text of the Secret, Sister Lucy mentions this devouring fire which, as it burns the damned, makes them undergo atrocious sufferings.

Here again, be it noted, there is a perfect correspondence with the entire New Testament, where there are dozens of references by Jesus or His Apostles to the «eternal fire» or to the «gehenna of fire». By what blindness, today, do we neglect these innumerable texts, when they are so formal and explicit, and one or two would be sufficient to solidly ground our faith in the terrible chastisement of eternal fire?

«And if thy hand or thy foot is an occasion of sin to thee, cut it off and cast it from thee! It is better for thee to enter life maimed or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast *into the everlasting fire*. And if thy eye is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee! It is better for thee to enter life with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast *into the gehenna of fire.*»²⁹

And in that grandiose picture Jesus creates of the Last Judgment, He says: «Then He will say to those on His left hand: “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels... and these will go into everlasting punishment, but the just into everlasting life.”»³⁰

The vision of Fatima is fully biblical: it lets us see how this terrible fire in itself summarizes the various torments of the damned.

A SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL FIRE. The fire of hell is a real fire with nothing metaphorical about it – of that we can be sure! It is a spiritual and physical fire which burns the whole being taken together, in all its powers or faculties, just as coal is entirely consumed by the fire. «*The souls (writes Lucy) were like transparent, burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze*», and the devils themselves appeared «*black and transparent, like burning embers.*» In other words, nothing escapes this terrible sensation of burning. It is both physical, and, even more horribly, spiritual as well.

And the spiritual burning? It is the terrible «*pain of loss*», the eternal and definitive privation of God. The most painful thing for the soul is the fire of the Divine Wrath, and His just judgment. What could be more terrible than the angry Face of God, the Thrice Holy? What could be more frightful than the sentence of the “jealous God”, spurned in His infinite Love? As the Apostle Saint Paul writes in his Epistle to the Hebrews: «For if we sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice for sins, but a certain dread expectation of judgment, and *the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries*. A man making void the Law of Moses dies without any mercy on the word of two or three witnesses: how much worse punishments do you think he deserves who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant through which He was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him Who has said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.*» (Heb. 10:26-31) «For Yahweh your God», we read in Deuteronomy, «*is a devouring fire, a jealous God.*» (Dt 4.24)

The fire of hell is also a physical, mysterious fire, no doubt different from the fire we are familiar with here below, but a real and terrible fire nevertheless. It is the instrument of the divine chastisement, this «pain of sense», which combines its torments with those of the «pain of loss».

AN INTERIOR FIRE. While he is burned from without, the damned finds in himself the source of another fire which redoubles his sufferings: the souls of the damned, having human forms, «*floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great*

clouds of smoke». Does not this interior fire correspond to the ever-renewed flame of remorse, fury and despair? Does it not express the same interior torture as «the worm which never dies», mentioned by Our Lord?³¹

«SHRIEKS OF PAIN AND DESPAIR»

One last trait completes the picture of the frightful lot of the damned: the absence of all peace, stability, and repose in themselves: «*They were floating in this fire... falling back on every side, like sparks in a huge fire, without weight or equilibrium...*» Without any mastery over their own being, they are the plaything of the flames which devour them.

Along with this horrible spectacle, Lucy relates, there were «*shrieks and groans of pain and despair which horrified us and made us trembles with fright.*» And this recalls for us the «weeping and gnashing of teeth» so often mentioned in the Gospel: «So will it be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the just, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, where *there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*» (Mt. 13:49-50).

Here then is hell, exactly as Our Lady willed to show it to the three innocent shepherds. It is simply the teaching of Jesus which is recalled for us, literally and insistently, by the Mother of God. It is as if She wanted to arm us in advance against the modernist heresy, which has succeeded in getting this tragic reality almost completely forgotten, even within the Church: because the majority of pastors no longer preach hell, many of the faithful no longer believe in it, and those who do believe in it hardly ever think of it. That is why this part of the Secret is more relevant than ever for us.

To understand the real implications of the vision of hell, its central place in the message of Fatima, it is sufficient to listen to our little seers, Lucy, Jacinta, and Francisco, since they actually *saw* it. They are the best interpreters of what they contemplated, seized with fright, for as Sister Lucy herself tells us, «ordinarily God accompanies His revelations with an intimate and detailed knowledge of what they signify.»³²

III. THE TESTIMONY OF THE THREE SEERS

A TERRIFYING FEAR

Several witnesses of the apparition of July 13, as we have already said, mentioned the sudden fear which came over the children.³³ Lucy's face became livid, and she cried: «Aie, Our Lady! Aie, Our Lady!» Witnesses whose testimony is all the more valuable, since they were present at the apparition, did not learn the reason for this sudden fright until much later on. Lucy tells us that if Our Lady had not promised, on May 13, to take the children to Heaven, «I believe we would have died of fright.» Since that day, this terrifying fear remained imprinted on their souls. The few passages in the Memoirs, where Sister Lucy explains how this fear came to have a decisive importance in their mystical life, are among the most stirring parts of the book.

“... HORRIFIED... TO THE POINT OF BEING CONSUMED WITH FRIGHT.” «Jacinta (she writes) was very impressed by certain things revealed in the Secret. This was in fact the case. *The vision of hell had horrified her to such a point* that all penances and mortifications to her seemed insufficient to save some souls from hell ...»

«Certain people, even pious people, did not like to speak of hell to the children, so as not to frighten them (Lucy records). But God did not hesitate to show it to the three children, one of whom was only six, and He knew quite well that she would be *horrified, to the point of being consumed with fright, I would go so far as to say.*»³⁴

“WE FOUND HIM TREMBLING WITH FEAR...” And Francisco? «At the third apparition (Lucy informs us), he seemed to be the one least impressed by the vision of hell, although it did have a considerable effect on him.»³⁵

Nevertheless, although he was in no sense a timorous or fearful character, he did strive «never to think of hell, so as not to be afraid». «When Jacinta would become disturbed at the thought of hell, he used to say to her: “Do not think of hell so much! Think about Our Lord and Our Lady instead. I never think about hell, so that I won't be afraid.”»³⁶

Yet, if the Most Holy Virgin willed to show this terrible spectacle to Her three privileged souls, it was so that they would remember it, and the constant thought of the eternal ruin of the damned would incite them to unceasing prayers and sacrifices for sinners. So Francisco tried to forget about hell? Heaven reminded

him of it by a new vision. Here is Sister Lucy's account:

«One day we were looking for a place called the Pedreira, and, as the sheep passed by, we climbed from one rock to another, trying to make our voice echo from the bottom of these great ravines. Francisco, as usual, retired into the hollow of a rock. After a long pause, we heard him crying, calling on Our Lady and invoking Her.

«We were very disturbed, thinking something had happened to him. We began to look for him, saying: "Where are you?" "Here! Here!" But it still took us a little while to reach where he was. We found him, finally, trembling with fear, still on his knees, very much shaken and incapable of getting up. "What's the matter with you? What happened?" In a voice half suffocated with fear, he told us: "One of those great big beasts from hell was just here, breathing fire."³⁷»

AN IMMENSE PITY

Jacinta was almost seized with dizziness, so great was her pity for poor sinners. «What astonished her the most (says Lucy) was eternity. Even while she was playing, from time to time she would ask: "Even after years and years, hell still doesn't end?"³⁸» And Lucy would always supply the astonishing, but correct, reply of the catechism: "No, never, never! Hell is eternal."

«Jacinta would often sit on the ground or on a rock, and she would say, growing pensive: "Oh, hell, hell! *How sorry I am for the souls that go to hell!* And the people who are there, being burned alive, like wood in a fire!" And she would kneel down, half trembling, with her hands joined, to recite the prayer Our Lady had taught us: "O my Jesus, forgive us, deliver us from the fire of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need"... And Jacinta would remain kneeling for a long time, repeating the same prayer.»³⁹

To see that Lucy is not making anything up, it is enough to look at the admirable photograph of the two cousins, taken in October of 1917, while they were staying at Reixida: Lucy is standing and Jacinta is seated on a rock next to her. Jacinta's hands are joined in prayer, and she is going through the beads of her Rosary; she has an extraordinarily profound look, unspeakably sad although still

peaceful.⁴⁰ Lucy remembered her friend, and gave us an intimate picture of her. Jacinta had seen hell. She knew that many souls go to hell. She never got over it. This was her torment, but also the source of her heroic generosity. Let us take a few more texts, for they are so eloquent, so moving.

«SO MANY PEOPLE GO TO HELL! SO MANY!»

«Sometimes (Lucy recalls) Jacinta would call me or she would call her brother (as if she were waking from sleep): “Francisco! Francisco! Are you praying with me? We must pray a lot to save souls from hell. *So many go there! So many!*”⁴¹

«Other times, after reflecting for a moment, she would say: “*So many people fall into hell! So many are in hell!*” To reassure her, I would say to her: “Don’t worry, you’re going to Heaven.” “Yes, I’m going”, she would say calmly, “but I wish everyone would go there also!”⁴²»

Under the movement of grace, her childlike heart grew in an astonishing degree, to the dimensions of the crowds at the Cova da Iria, to the dimensions of the whole world.

Another time Lucy relates a terrible secret her cousin told her, as Jacinta was riveted to her bed by the sickness that would soon take her away:

«One day, I went to her house to stay a little while with her. I found her seated on the bed, very pensive. “Jacinta, what are you thinking of?” Jacinta replied, “About the war which will come. So many people will die, *and almost all of them will go to hell!*”⁴³»

“SO MANY ARE DAMNED!” Lucy herself, during her whole life, never ceased bearing witness to what she had seen. She never tired of repeating the great warning of July 13, 1917.

Father Lombardi, founder of the “Movement for a Better World”, visited her on October 13, 1953 [according to Father Alonso, this interview took place on February 7, 1954]. He got around to questioning her on the subject of hell. The conversation is worth quoting:

«“Do you really believe that many people go to hell? I myself hope that God will save the greater number (I wrote the same thing in a book entitled, *The Salvation of the Unbeliever*).” “*Many are those who are lost.*”

“Certainly the world is a cesspool of vices... But there is always hope of salvation.” “*No, Father, many are lost.*”»⁴⁴

More recently, in a letter to a young man tempted to leave his seminary, three times she recalled to him the grave danger of falling into hell. Here is how she ends her plea to the young man to remain faithful to his vocation:

«Do not be surprised that I speak to you so much about hell. This is one truth that it is necessary to recall often in these times, because we forget that *souls are falling into hell in droves*. Why? All the sacrifices that you make so as not to go there, and to prevent many others from going there – will you not find them well worth it?»⁴⁵

Sister Lucy does not elaborate, nor does she add anything to these words.

In her conversation with William Thomas Walsh, the latter laid a “trap” for her – the thorny theological question of the number of the elect. It came in the form of a question:

«“Our Lady showed you many souls going to hell. Did you get the impression from her that more souls are damned than saved?” This amused her a little. “*I saw those that were going down*. I didn’t see those that were going up.”»⁴⁶

What wisdom in this response! It is not for us to compare and make this calculation. The Gospel tells us nothing explicit, and the controversy is futile. We must be content with what God wants us to know, and with what Our Lady recalls to us so insistently: “Many are those who are lost”, and at the end of their life of sin, they fall into this “ocean of fire” which is hell.

«*OH! IF ONLY I COULD SHOW THEM HELL!*»

What can be done to preserve souls from falling into this fatal state? Seeing the great crowds at the Cova da Iria – this was in July, August or September, 1917, and the pious pilgrims, as well as the unbelieving and the curious were coming

by the thousands every thirteenth of the month –, Jacinta had an idea:

«“Why doesn’t Our Lady show hell to sinners?” she asked Lucy. “If they could see it, they wouldn’t sin, so as not to go there. You must ask Our Lady to show hell to all these people... You’ll see, they’ll be converted.”

«After the following apparition, she was somewhat unhappy and asked me: “Why didn’t you ask Our Lady to show hell to all these people?” “I forgot”, I answered. “I forgot too”, she said, looking sad.»⁴⁷

Jacinta had understood well that the horrifying vision was not for themselves alone, but for the salvation of sinners. Since it did not enter into the designs of Our Lady to «show hell to all these people», it was necessary that Lucy at least speak to them about it:

«Sometimes, she would suddenly grab my arm and say: “I’m going to Heaven. But since you are staying here, if Our Lady lets you, *tell all these people what hell is like, so that they don’t commit any more sins and don’t go there!*”»⁴⁸

How right she was! Of course, it is not conformable to the designs of God to give all men the vision of hell. Besides, not even that would suffice to convert hardened sinners, and Dom Jean-Nesmy is right to remind us of the parable of poor Lazarus and the words attributed to Abraham: «If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, they will not believe even if someone rises from the dead.» (Lk. 16:31) Still, that does not change what all of Holy Scripture and Jesus Himself teach, as well as all the Saints who came after Him and followed His example: We must preach about hell untiringly, so that all souls of good will are averted, and, moved by a salutary fear, are converted. The greatest victory of the devil is to succeed in making his existence forgotten, so that nobody fears the chastisements of hell any more. This is a well known truth. The Venerable Pope Pius IX told the priests of Rome that the devil feared those priests who preach about hell. This kind of preaching is so beneficial to souls – the most miserable as well as the most perfect – because it makes them all grow in their horror and hatred of sin.

«*HOW SORRY I AM FOR SINNERS!*»

«*You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go*», the Most Blessed Virgin had said. Concerning these last words, Jacinta had a question:

«Sometimes (Lucy recalls) she would ask: “What sins do people commit to go to hell?” “I don’t know. Perhaps the sin of not going to Mass on Sunday, of stealing, saying bad words, or swearing.” “And for one word, they go to hell?” “It’s a sin.” “What would it cost them to be quiet and go to Mass? How sorry I am for sinners! Oh, if only I could show them hell.”»⁴⁹

This question preoccupied Jacinta. To warn souls, she wanted to know for what sins so many souls are damned. She was not satisfied with Lucy’s answers, so she asked the Most Holy Virgin during the apparitions she had during her sickness. A detailed account of these new apparitions we will give later on. Here we will give only the response of Our Lady: «*The sins which lead the most souls to hell are sins of the flesh.*»⁵⁰ What a lesson for our modern society, even more corrupted now than it was at the beginning of the century!

TO SAVE SOULS BY PRAYER AND SACRIFICES

Jacinta, as we shall see, was not satisfied with warning us of the danger. With an unbelievable generosity, she completely devoted herself to prayer and penance to preserve souls from being eternally lost. She was truly goaded on by this thought, to unceasing and constantly renewed acts of love and reparation. Sister Lucy could truthfully write this about Jacinta: «All the penances and mortifications seemed to her as nothing, if through them she could *save a few souls from hell.*»⁵¹

To pray, to ask pardon of God, to offer Him sacrifices in the name of sinners and in their place, in reparation for their faults and to console the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary – here is the whole spirituality of Fatima, which was the program of sanctity for Lucy, Jacinta, and Francisco. And how simple it is! It goes right to the essential: Heaven and hell, the thought of sin, of Redemption, and the Communion of Saints.

In a single sentence, Our Lady summed up the whole drama of our life, the danger menacing us, and the most pressing appeal to generous love: «*Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners*», She said on August 19, growing somewhat sadder in Her appearance, «*for many souls go to hell because they*

have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them.»

CONCLUSION: *«HELL EXISTS, AND WE COULD FALL INTO IT!»*

This is what the Blessed Virgin wished to teach us at the Cova da Iria, before all else. Sister Lucy never stopped insisting on this point. On December 26, 1957, she is quoted as saying to Father Fuentes:

*«My mission is not to announce to the world the material chastisements which will surely come if the world does not pray and do penance. No. My mission is to indicate to everyone the imminent danger we are in of losing our souls for ever if we remain obstinate in sin.»*⁵²

On July 11, 1977, after a visit to Sister Lucy in the Carmel of Coimbra, Cardinal Luciani, the future Pope John Paul I, summarized this first part of the Secret, in words that can hardly be improved on:

«Hell exists, and we could fall into it (he wrote). At Fatima, Our Lady taught us this prayer: “O my Jesus, forgive us, deliver us from the fire of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need.” There are important things in this world, but there is nothing more important than to merit Heaven by living well. It is not only Fatima that says so, but the Gospel: “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”» (Mt. 16:26)⁵³

CHAPTER II

THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF SOULS

«This vision (Lucy continues) lasted only a moment... otherwise I believe we would have died of fright.

«Terrified, and as if to plead for succour, we looked up at Our Lady, who said to us, so kindly and so sadly: “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart”.»

Such are the words in which Our Lady Herself wished to give us the lesson to be drawn from the terrifying vision of hell. These are gentle, calming words, full of a warm hope. For never does God reveal to us the terrible danger of our eternal damnation without immediately opening to us the arms of His mercy, indicating to us a way of salvation which is easy, accessible, and so attractive!

After the atrocious spectacle of the infernal devils comes the “blessed vision of peace”, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, Queen and Gate of Heaven.

Let us comment word for word on these few phrases, the simplicity of which is equalled only by the profound richness of their content.

I. AN ANGUISHED APPEAL FOR HELP

«TERRIFIED, AND AS IF TO PLEAD FOR SUCCOUR...»

He who does not understand, and who has never felt this fright, this profound and real fear of eternity in hell, and first of all for himself, will hardly be able to penetrate the real meaning of the rest of the Secret. For let us have no hesitation in repeating it: the consideration of hell is literally the first and last word of the Secret. It is not through chance if, just as it begins with the vision of hell, the Secret ends with the little prayer which Our Lady teaches us: «When you recite the Rosary, say after each mystery: “O my Jesus, forgive us, deliver us from the fire of hell,” etc.»

Hell is therefore a real threat for us also. The greatest saints themselves feared this eternal perdition. Here are the words of one of the most recent, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, this angel of purity who wrote down in his private notebook: «*You can still sin gravely and go to hell.*»⁵⁴ Then what about us! We have within us a persistent source of malice, an inclination to sin so strong that, unless we continually implore God for His grace and pardon, this inclination would inevitably lead us straight to hell. «Hell exists, and I myself can go there» – such is the true conviction of every true Christian.⁵⁵

«... WE LOOKED UP AT OUR LADY...»

Penetrated with this salutary fright, which little by little leads to filial fear, the children spontaneously called for help. It is enough for us to lift up our eyes: the Blessed Virgin is there, opening wide the doors of Her Heart to us. As Father Alonso writes: «The vision of hell was given to inspire the children to have recourse to the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Her powerful intercession for the salvation of sinners.»⁵⁶

Our Lady Herself, with an admirable pedagogical art, willed this contrast. The radiant vision of the Immaculate Heart of Mary immediately follows the horrible vision, like the second in a series of paintings. We are face to face with the absolute Evil which threatens us – eternal chastisement, and even before that the evil of mortal sin which leads to it. All of Fatima reminds us these two are inseparable. God offers to us who are faced with this Evil the only Remedy which can preserve us from it: the Immaculate Heart of His Mother, Refuge of Sinners.

Sister Lucy explains this to Father Fuentes, indicating to him the way of salvation: «Finally devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Most Holy Mother, *considering Her as the seat of clemency, goodness and pardon, and the sure gate for entering Heaven.*»⁵⁷

Here we are in the purest Catholic tradition, which from time immemorial has venerated the Blessed Virgin as the «Mother of mercy and pardon», «the patroness of the most desperate causes», our last recourse after the greatest faults, as in the most terrible temptations. An eloquent testimony to this truth is the touching exhortation of Saint Bernard, which the liturgy has us read on the feast of the Holy Name of Mary:

«O man, whoever you are, if you realize that in the whirlwind of this world, far from walking on firm ground, you are driven hither and thither by storms and tempests, turn not your eyes from this bright Star, if you do not want to be swallowed up by the hurricane. If the winds of temptation are stirred up, if you encounter dangers and tribulations, look at the Star, and invoke Mary: “respice Stellam, voca Mariam”!

«If you are shaken by waves of pride, ambition, criticism or jealousy, look at the Star and invoke Mary! If anger, avarice, or the seductions of the flesh stir up a storm in your soul, cast a glance towards Mary, “respice ad Mariam”.

«If troubled by the enormity of your crimes, confused by the weight of the sins on your conscience, you feel yourself slipping into the whirlpool of sadness and the abyss of despair, then think of Mary, “cogita Mariam”. In perils, in anguish, in perplexity, think of Mary, invoke Mary. Let Her name be constantly on your lips, let it never leave your heart...»⁵⁸

Yes, this is exactly what took place: faced with the danger of sin as well as the menace of hell, *«terrified, and as if to plead for succour, we looked up at Our Lady»*: “Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte!” To this appeal from the children, full of anguish, Heaven deigned to respond.

II. THE PITY OF A MOTHER’S HEART

«... We looked up at Our Lady, *who said to us so kindly and so sadly*: “You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go.”»

«*SO KINDLY AND SO SADLY...*»

At Lourdes, although Bernadette cried one day because the Blessed Virgin seemed so sad, at other times the Blessed Virgin had nevertheless smiled. In the sky of Pontmain, by just one smile, Our Lady of Hope had ravished the seers with unspeakable joy: «See, She is smiling! See, She is smiling!» they exclaimed.⁵⁹ Then, jumping for joy, and clapping their hands, they kept saying: «Oh, She is so beautiful! She is so beautiful!» At Buissonnets also, the Blessed Virgin had smiled, instantly healing little Therese of her mysterious malady.

However, at the Cova da Iria, the Blessed Virgin always appeared serious, and

never smiled. Canon Formigao had asked Francisco: «Did She ever weep or smile at all?» «Neither one nor the other, *She is always serious.*»⁶⁰

«Tell them also, Lucy is quoted as saying to Father Fuentes, that my cousins Francisco and Jacinta sacrificed themselves because *they always saw the Blessed Virgin very sad in all Her apparitions. While with us She never smiled*, and this sadness, this anguish we noticed in Her is because of offences against God and the chastisements threatening sinners. This anguish of Hers penetrated our soul; in our childish imaginations we could hardly think of enough ways to pray and make sacrifices...»⁶¹

This twofold sadness is the fruit of a twofold love: love of God, who is so offended, and love of men, who march so miserably to their damnation.

Let us quote yet another statement of Sister Lucy's. In 1946, William Thomas Walsh asked her:

«“Does the statue in the shrine at the Cova da Iria look like the Lady you saw there?” “No, not much. I was disappointed when I saw it. *For one thing it was too gay, too alegre. When I saw Our Lady, She was more triste, or rather, more compassionate.* But it would be impossible to make a statue as beautiful as She is.”»⁶²

This sadness of Our Lady, like the sadness of God which so afflicted Francisco, manifests the immense gravity of sin. Yet it is still full of goodness and *compassion* for sinners: Our Lady would like to tear them all away from the peril of eternal fire. «*Poor sinners*», Our Lady says, such as in French, when they say the Hail Mary, the faithful say “pray for us poor sinners”, judging the Latin formula, “pray for us sinners”, to be a bit too austere. We are reminded of Saint Bernadette, who made these words her last ones. She had seen the Blessed Virgin and lived like a saint. Still, on her deathbed, she kept repeating: «Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me, a poor sinner, a poor sinner.»

III. AN INCOMPARABLE DESIGN OF LOVE FOR THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

This unspeakable sadness of the Heart of Mary in our regard cannot leave the Heart of God insensible for very long: He cannot resist Her intercession in our

favour. Our Lady continues: «You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. *To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.*» Our Lady repeats this last phrase on July 13 for the second time; She had already said it on June 13, before manifesting Her Heart to the children. *Here is the “secret of the Secret”, the whole essence and most important element of the Message of Fatima.* More than anything else, and before anything else, Fatima is first of all the revelation by Our Lady of the Heart of God, His great design of love, and His absolute and irrevocable will for our times. This sentence looms large like an oracle, and every word must be carefully weighed.

“GOD WISHES...” The Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is not a matter of personal taste, an optional choice left to the faithful depending on their own interior attractions. Still less, of course, is it a desire Our Lady has for Her own benefit. No! *It is willed by God.* And not only is it willed by God hypothetically, or as something that “would be nice”, it is an absolute, unconditional will of God Himself!

“TO ESTABLISH IN THE WORLD DEVOTION TO MY IMMACULATE HEART.” Devotions usually spread more or less gradually, from province to province, nation to nation, or from religious family to religious family. In the case of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, God wishes it to be extended to the entire world; and He wishes it to be «*established*». In other words, it is not simply a matter of a private devotion, which can take rise, flourish and disappear, but a public cult – solemn and established on a stable foundation, and therefore a liturgical cult – recognized, patronized and spread by the hierarchy itself.

THE FINAL REVELATION OF THE HEART OF GOD

At Fatima, God could have manifested His Omnipotence as He did to Moses on Mount Sinai. He could have manifested His Wisdom as He did to the prophets. Such, however, was not His design. If He worked stirring miracles and prophecies at Fatima, it was secondary; it was to bring us to believe in His essential message. He could have showed us His Justice, as He did so many times in the Old Testament. He did not will to do it. Fatima is not a gospel of wrath, even if we are threatened there with terrible chastisements. No, what God has revealed to us there is His Heart. *His Heart, that is the Sacred Heart of*

Jesus, and what is dearest to this Heart, Its most profound intention, which is to make the Immaculate Heart of His Mother loved.

God wills that this Immaculate Heart of Mary reign, so that He Himself, in His Trinity of Persons, can be satisfied in His greatest Love. He loves Mary more than anything else, and He wishes Her to be glorified, honoured, loved, and served by all His other creatures. If we may dare to say it, in this lies the joy of God, His good pleasure, according to Fatima. From this primordial, boundless love for the Immaculate Virgin flows His absolute decree to make Her the *universal Mediatrix*, and the Instrument of Salvation for our souls: «To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»

Thus the revelation of Fatima completes that of Paray-le-Monial, and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is united with devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which He has demanded for over a century and a half. For these two devotions, just like the two Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, are inseparable and one can never go without the other. They necessarily go together and they mutually reinforce each other. Such is the great design of Our Heavenly Father for «the last centuries of history»: *the reign and universal triumph of Their two united Hearts.*

He has for the Heart of Jesus, His only beloved Son, pierced upon the Cross, a love so powerful that henceforth He wishes this Heart to be the object of a universal devotion; that everything be granted to us through this Heart, and nothing outside of It. And secondly, the Father and the Son, in the Heart of Jesus, have such Love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for Her Sorrowful Heart at Calvary, pierced with thorns by the sins of the world, that They have decided that everything would be granted to mankind through Her agency, *through Her alone, and nothing without Her.* Behold Her now, in Her turn, established as *CO-Redemptrix* alongside Jesus, our universal Mediatrix, “*the Mediatrix of all graces*”.

IV. A GREAT DESIGN OF MERCY FOR SINNERS

«TO SAVE THEM...»

God is Love, and in His infinite Wisdom He found a way to combine His first love, His unique and incomparable love for the Immaculate Virgin, and His

infinite mercy for us poor sinners. And how? By deciding to save us through Her and Her alone, since She has become inseparable from Her Son, our unique Redeemer. There does She find Her honour and glory, while sinners find their salvation and their joy! «*Our salvation is in Her hands*», chants the liturgy for the feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces. At Fatima, Our Lady reveals Herself in all clarity as the Queen and Gate of Heaven; to Her the eternal destiny of souls has been confided.

DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, A SURE SIGN OF SALVATION

The apparition of July 13, 1917 sheds a bright new light on this truth of the Secret, a truth of decisive importance. When the children ask Her to take them to Heaven right away, Our Lady answers as though She were a Sovereign: «Yes, Francisco and Jacinta, *I will take them soon.*» Lucy alone was to remain: «Jesus wishes to use you to make Me known and loved... My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way which will lead you to God.» Thus Our Lady Herself promised to take Her three privileged souls to Heaven.

Then, through an unbelievable disposition of mercy, the promise is immediately extended to all. For Our Lady continues: «Jesus wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart. *To whomever will embrace this devotion, I PROMISE SALVATION*; these souls will be dear to God, like flowers placed by Me to adorn His throne...» What stupefying words! An unbelievably easy way of salvation is offered us: it is enough that we adopt the predilection of the Heart of Jesus for the Immaculate Virgin, and to prove our fidelity by accomplishing Her little requests. What an anchor of salvation, what a sure and easy way for the poor souls of sinners, and the weak and cowardly souls that we are! What an unprecedented offer: devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the only condition for obtaining salvation! Who would still dare to say that Heaven is too hard to gain?

BUT IT IS THE FINAL MEANS, THE LAST RECOURSE!

Since the keys of Heaven have been entrusted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, how vain and perilous it would be to want to enter through any other door. To despise, then, the last excess of the mercy of our God and Saviour would mean turning a

deaf ear to the offers of the Immaculate Heart of His Mother; on our part it would constitute a grave injury to God. Sister Lucy explains to Father Fuentes:

«The Holy Rosary and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary are *our two last recourses*, and so this means there will be no others... With a certain trepidation God offers us *the final means of salvation, His Most Holy Mother*. For if we scorn and reject this final means, we will no longer have the pardon of Heaven, because we have committed a sin which the Gospel calls the sin against the Holy Spirit, which consists in openly rejecting, with full knowledge and consent, the salvation being offered us. Let us remember that Jesus Christ is a good Son, and He does not permit us to offend and despise His Most Holy Mother.»⁶³

The Message of Fatima teaches us insistently one thing we had not considered: since God decided to attach such promises to the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of His Mother, the greatest sin in His eyes is the lukewarmness, the deliberate forgetfulness and scorn towards this Heart through which the Holy Trinity wishes to grant us the greatest blessings.

But, you will say: what if I do not have this devotion? Understand first that there is nothing astonishing in this, for it does not come of itself. Sister Lucy tells us that it is like an “infused virtue”. Like all other graces, it is obtained by prayer. We also receive it through a kind of “supernatural attraction” seeing it at work in the souls of the saints who lived it to perfection.

V. DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, AN UPLIFTING CALL TO SANCTITY

Besides being the final recourse of the greatest sinners on the verge of perdition, devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary also stands out in the Message of Fatima as the surest and most rapid road to sanctity. The life of the three seers is a striking and fascinating proof.

If the Angel precursor, in his three apparitions of 1916, as well as Our Lady on May 13 had already mentioned the Immaculate Heart of Mary, it was only on June 13 that the three seers received the full revelation.⁶⁴ «*Before the palm of the right hand of Our Lady was a Heart surrounded by thorns which seemed to be piercing It. We understood that It was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, outraged*

by the sins of humanity, which desired reparation.» The vision was accompanied with an infused grace which filled the children with «a special knowledge and love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary... Since that day, as Lucy tells us, we felt in our hearts a more ardent love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»⁶⁵

AN AFFECTIONATE AND TENDER DEVOTION

Silent on her own spiritual progress, Lucy relates for us – and with such refreshing spontaneity! – Jacinta’s outbursts of love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Here is one of the most beautiful passages in the Memoirs:

«From time to time Jacinta would say to me: “Our Lady said that Her Immaculate Heart would be your refuge and the road which would lead you to God. Don’t you love that? *As for myself, I love Her Heart, it is so good!*”»

«After the month of July, when Our Lady told us in the Secret that God wishes to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and that to prevent the future war, She would come to ask for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart as well as the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays, when we would talk among ourselves Jacinta would say: “I am so sorry I cannot receive Communion in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary!”

«Among the ejaculatory prayers Father Cruz had taught us, Jacinta had chosen this one: “*Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!*” Sometimes, after saying this prayer, she would add, with the simplicity so natural to her, “I love the Immaculate Heart of Mary so much! It is the Heart of our little Heavenly Mother! Don’t you love to repeat, often, *Sweet Heart of Mary, Immaculate Heart of Mary? I love that so much!*”

«Sometimes, she would gather flowers from the fields and sing, with a melody she would invent at the same time: “Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation! Immaculate Heart of Mary, convert sinners, save souls from hell!”»⁶⁶

Let us quote also this charming anecdote which shows how devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary always necessarily makes us grow in love for the

Sacred Heart of Jesus:

«One day I was given a beautiful image of the Heart of Jesus, at least as beautiful an image as men can make of it. I brought it to Jacinta: “Do you want this image?” She took it, looked at it closely, and said: “It’s so ugly! It doesn’t at all look like Our Lord. He is so beautiful! But I want it anyway. It’s Him just the same!”

«She always carried it around. At night, when she became sick, she kept it under her pillow until it cracked. She kissed it often and said: “*I kiss it over the Heart; that’s what I love the most. How I would also like to have a Heart of Mary! Do you have any? I would love to have the two together.*”»⁶⁷

Let us quote, finally, the admirable words by which Jacinta, as if expressing her last will and testament, confided to Lucy the most intimate secret of her soul. At the same time, she expressed in an incomparable manner the quintessence of the Message of Fatima:

«Shortly before leaving for the hospital, she said to me: “I don’t have much time left before going to Heaven. You will stay here, to tell the world that God wants to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When the moment comes, do not be silent. *Tell the whole world that God gives graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that we must ask Her for them; that the Heart of Jesus wishes the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be venerated alongside of It; and that we must ask for peace through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, since God has entrusted it to Her.*”

«“Oh, if only I could put into all hearts the fire I have in my heart, which makes me burn with so much love for the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary!”»⁶⁸

Lucy, who was charged for her part with «making known and loved» the Immaculate Heart of Mary, never forgot her mission. To close this chapter, let us listen to her reveal to us, in just a few lines, the Secret of secrets:

«I always remember the great promise which fills me with joy: ***“You will never be alone. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the road which will lead you to God.”*** I believe that this promise is not for me alone,

but for all souls who wish to take refuge in the Heart of their Heavenly Mother, and let themselves be drawn wherever She leads them... It seems to me that these are also the intentions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary: to make this ray of light shine before souls, to show them once more this Port of Salvation, always ready to welcome all the shipwrecked of this world... As for myself, even as I savour the delicious fruits of this beautiful garden, I strive to make them more available to souls, so that there they may quench their thirst with grace, comfort, and heavenly aid.»⁶⁹

In another letter, Sister Lucy reports confidences made by Our Lord Himself:

«I desire most ardently, He says, the propagation of the cult of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, because the love of this Heart attracts souls to Me; it is the centre from which the rays of My light and My love go through all the earth, and the unquenchable fountain from which the living water of My mercy flows into the earth.»⁷⁰

THE BEST COMMENTARY ON THE SECRET: THE LIFE OF THE THREE SEERS

Here is the whole essence of the Secret, and this was also the deepest inspiration of the life of our three seers. Their souls were so profoundly marked by the great Secret of Our Lady that the account of their lives is the best commentary on it. And, conversely, one could never understand the lightning speed of their ascent along the way of holiness, unless it were considered in the light of the great themes of the Secret: an immense compassion for sinners on the road to hell; confidence without limits in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as the final recourse capable of saving souls from hell; a vehement desire to go to Heaven and lead many souls there, by prayer and sacrifices; and finally a constant solicitude to make reparation vicariously for the faults of sinners, by offering loving consolation to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, outraged by sin.

Such was the program of sanctity for our three shepherds. All that remains for us is to see how heroically they put it into practice: in sickness and even unto death in the case of Jacinta and Francisco, and in exact obedience and immolation for Lucy, who was called to remain here below as the witness of the apparitions and messenger of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

SECTION II: A secret of sanctity, the life of the three seers.

CHAPTER III

FRANCISCO:

«GOD IS SO SAD... IF ONLY I COULD CONSOLE HIM!» (OCTOBER 1917 - APRIL 4, 1919)

Since May 13 and the first “vision of God” which Our Lady had granted to Her privileged ones, Francisco, who had a contemplative and tender heart, was continually animated by one thought, dominated by just one sentiment: *The Blessed Virgin and God Himself are infinitely sad; we must console Them.*

I. THE GREAT SADNESS OF GOD

Here is an earth-shaking revelation which the Message of Fatima brings to light. Of course, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoy an infinite beatitude which nothing could ever alter. This is an unquestionable truth, taught also by theology. And yet a mysterious suffering, a real pain that sinners cause Him coexists in Him with this perfect joy, this unalloyed happiness which is lacking in nothing.

Yes, it is a mystery which makes sense only in the light of His incomprehensible love for His creatures: the love of a kind-hearted Father who goes so far as to deliver over His only and beloved Son to death (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:32), the love of a Spouse and a Brother who sheds for us all the Blood from His Heart, the love of a sweet Friend, a Defender and Consoler Who wishes to remain in our souls for ever. Because *our rebellions grieve Him* (Is. 63:10), Saint Paul exhorts us «not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.» (Eph. 4:30)

WHEN GOD WEEPS. Yes, as mysterious as it might seem to us, God really “suffers”, He is sad because of our sins, our hardness of heart which makes us deaf to His appeals and draws down upon us His paternal chastisements: «But if you do not hear this warning, My soul shall weep in secret for your pride: weeping it shall weep, and My eyes shall run down with tears, because the flock of the Lord is carried away captive.» (Jer. 13:17)

“SORROWFUL EVEN UNTO DEATH.” Jesus, the “Image of the Father”, His only and beloved Son, has given us a perfect expression of this “Divine sorrow”, for in a real sense He lived it in His soul: in His perfect sensibility as man, He

wanted to be able to suffer, and to be vulnerable like us. In the garden of agony, He wanted to feel this human anguish even to the point of paroxysm, to the measure of His Divine sadness for our sins: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death” (Mk. 14:34), “and His sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground.” (Lk. 22:44.) And this great sadness of the Son, is it not, indeed before all else, the great sadness of the Father? “For he who sees Me, sees the Father.” (Jn. 14:9)

“IN AGONY UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD.” Yet, an even more astonishing mystery is that, even after rising from the dead, and being exalted up to Heaven where He sits in the Glory and infinite Joy of the Father, our Saviour still suffers, because of sins. As we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, «*they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and make Him a mockery...*» (Heb. 6:6) And it was He that Saul persecuted in the person of His disciples, who had become members of His body. (Acts 9:56) Yes, the Passion of Jesus continues, although in a different manner, and it will continue until the end of the world, as long as ungrateful men continue to offend Him.⁷¹

Is it not remarkable that, having willed to leave His Church the miraculous image of His Divine Face, Jesus chose to show it to us in a sorrowful state, imprinted with mortal sadness and all disfigured by the marks of His cruel Passion? Our risen Saviour, who came forth glorious from the tomb, could have left us an image of His Face resplendent with glory. But He did not wish to do so. He chose to give to men His outraged Face to contemplate, the face of the “Suffering Servant”. Why? So that this authentic photograph of His Body inscribed on His Shroud invite them, until the end of the world, to have compassion on Him and be converted.⁷²

“CONSOLE YOUR GOD!” In this agony, Jesus looks for souls willing to console Him, just as He did at Gethsemane. «I looked for compassion, but in vain, and for someone to console Me, and I found none...»⁷³ At Paray-le-Monial, Jesus will make the same complaint and the same appeal to St. Margaret Mary, showing her His Heart surrounded by thorns.⁷⁴

The life of little Francisco was marked by this stupefying revelation, this revelation of the Heart of God, *this sadness* which is the highest and unmistakeable mark of His love for us. This is the great message Francisco bequeaths to us.

«GOD IS SO SAD, BECAUSE OF SO MANY SINS!»

Francisco once confided to his sister and cousin:

«I loved seeing the Angel, but I loved still more seeing Our Lady. What I loved most of all was to see Our Lord in that light from Our Lady which penetrated our hearts. I love God so much! *But He is so sad because of so many sins!* We must never commit any sins again.»⁷⁵

This unspeakable sorrow was what moved the little seer the most, when he was again introduced by the Blessed Virgin into the Divine Light and the very mystery of God on June 13 and July 13. At that time he pronounced these striking words: «What is God?... We could never put it into words. Yes, that is something indeed which we could never express! *But what a pity it is that He is so sad!* If only I could console Him!...»⁷⁶ Francisco's words are mysterious, but ever so profoundly significant. In their laconic conciseness, they are certainly more true and more useful than so much vain speculation by philosophers about a Divine impassibility which only appears to men as the mark and the sign of a cold, dry, lonely heart, which can love neither itself nor anybody else. But if God shows that He is sad because of our sins, it is because He has an infinite love for us,⁷⁷ as a loving Father Who pardons repentant hearts, but knows that He will have to chastise in a terrible manner, rebellious and hardened hearts who prove deaf to all His advances.

On August 19, and again on October 13, Our Lady showed Herself as very afflicted. In this contemplation, Francisco found his own vocation, the end of his whole life: *to console God and console Our Lady.*

«I WOULD LIKE TO CONSOLE OUR LORD»

Here is Sister Lucy's own account of what her cousin confided to her:

«I asked him one day (doubtless shortly after October 13, 1917):
“Francisco, which do you like better: to console Our Lord, or to convert sinners, so that no more souls go to hell?” “*I would rather console Our Lord. Didn't you notice how sad Our Lady was that last month when She said that people must not offend Our Lord any more, for He is already much offended?* I would like to console Our Lord, and after that, convert sinners,

so that they won't offend Him any more."»⁷⁸

Already in 1916, at the Cabeço, the Angel had invited them to make reparation for the offences against the Eucharistic Jesus and to console Him. Before giving them His broken Body and His Blood poured out for us, he said: «Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes *and console your God.*» As we will see, soon, at Pontevedra, Our Lady will make the same request to Lucy, with insistence: «*You, at least, try to console Me...*»

But how can we fulfil this sublime office? By prayer and sacrifices. Francisco had understood this well.

TO CONSOLE GOD BY PRAYER. Since he prayed above all to console his God, Francisco felt moved by grace to look for solitude. He loved to be alone with God, heart to heart with Him.

«He spoke little (Lucy recalls), and whenever he prayed or offered sacrifices, he preferred to go apart and hide, even from Jacinta and myself. Quite often, we surprised him hidden behind a wall or a clump of blackberry bushes, whither he had ingeniously slipped away to kneel and pray, or, as he used to say, “to think of Our Lord, who is *so sad on account of so many sins.*”

«If I asked him: “Francisco, why don't you ask me to pray with you, and Jacinta too?” “*I prefer praying by myself*”, he would answer, “*so that I can think and console Our Lord, Who is so sad!*”»⁷⁹

TO CONSOLE GOD BY SUFFERING. Prayer and sacrifice are the two great inseparable means – for the one cannot please God without the other – by which God wishes to be consoled for all the outrages He receives from sinners.

To sacrifice ourselves means, before all else, to accept all the sufferings which God sends us:

«From time to time, Francisco used to say: “Our Lady told us that we would have much to suffer, but I don't mind. *I'll suffer all that She wishes!* What I want is to go to Heaven!”

«One day, when I showed how unhappy I was over the persecution now

beginning both in my family and outside, Francisco tried to encourage me with these words: “Never mind! Didn’t Our Lady say that we would have much to suffer, to make reparation to Our Lord and to Her own Immaculate Heart for all the sins by which They are offended? *They are so sad! If we can console Them with these sufferings, how happy shall we be!*”»⁸⁰

This same constant determination to console Our Lord and the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Francisco with the desire to make sacrifices. Here is a charming episode reported by Sister Lucy:

«On our way to my home one day, we had to pass by my godmother’s house. She had just been making a mead drink, and called us in to give us a glass. We went in, and Francisco was the first to whom she offered a glassful. He took it, and without drinking it, he passed it on to Jacinta, so that she and I could have a drink first. Meanwhile, he turned on his heel and disappeared. “Where is Francisco?” my godmother asked. “I don’t know! He was here just now.”

«He did not return, so Jacinta and I thanked my godmother for the drink and went in search of Francisco. We knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that he would be sitting on the edge of a well which I have mentioned so often. “Francisco, you didn’t drink your glass of mead! My godmother called you so many times, and you did not appear!” “When I took the glass, *I suddenly remembered I could offer that sacrifice to console Our Lord, so while you two were taking a drink, I ran over here.*”»⁸¹

GIVING UP DANCING AND SINGING AS A SACRIFICE. Although they were used to making these little sacrifices – and their life as children offered them plenty of opportunities for such sacrifices each day – we must not imagine that our three shepherds went around like long-faced ascetics. Sister Lucy repeated many times that «we continued to play as before».

They remained so simple, so spontaneous, so utterly lacking in ostentation and contentiousness, that their neighbours quickly tended to forget the heavenly graces with which Heaven had favoured them. And their little companions the same age still expected Lucy to organize the games and merrymaking on feast days, as she did before the apparitions.

More than once, Lucy recalled in her Memoirs that Francisco himself intervened

to encourage her to resist these pressing requests of the little children. Since his mind had often dwelt on the great sorrow of God, he felt spontaneously that they at least, to whom the Blessed Virgin had manifested Her immense affliction, should no longer participate in certain games or diversions, however innocent they might be in themselves.

One day, Lucy's godmother had all three of the children over, as well as a group of children from the neighbourhood, to have the pleasure of seeing them sing and dance:

«The women of the neighbourhood no sooner heard the lively singing than they came over to join us, and at the end they asked us to sing it through again. Francisco, however, came up to me and said: "Let's not sing that song any more. Our Lord certainly does not want us to sing songs like that now." We therefore slipped away from the other children, and ran off to our favourite well.»⁸²

No, Francisco realized quite well that they could no longer entertain themselves like ordinary children.

THE CARNIVAL OF 1918. «Meanwhile, it was getting near carnival time, in 1918. The boys and girls met once again that year to prepare the usual festive meals and fun of those days. Each one brought something from home – such as olive oil, flour, meat, and so on – to one of the houses, and the girls then did the cooking for a sumptuous banquet. All those three days, feasting and dancing went on well into the night, above all on the last day of the Carnival.

«The children under fourteen had their own celebration in another house. Several of the girls came to help me organize their festival. At first, I refused. But finally, I gave in like a coward, especially after hearing the pleading of Jose Carreira's sons and daughter, for it was he who had placed his home in Casa Velha at our disposal. He and his wife insistently asked me to go there. I yielded then, and went with a crowd of youngsters to see the place. There was a fine large room, almost as big as a hall, which was well suited for the amusements, and a spacious yard for the supper! Everything was arranged, and I came home, outwardly in a most festive mood, but inwardly with my conscience protesting loudly.

«As soon as I met Jacinta and Francisco, I told them what had happened.
“Are you going back to those parties and games?” Francisco asked sternly.
“Have you already forgotten that we promised never to do that any more?”
“I didn’t want to go at all. But you can see how they never stopped begging me to go; and now I don’t know what to do!”

«There was indeed no end to the entreaties, nor to the number of girls who came insisting that I play with them. Some even came from far distant villages.» (And Lucy – once again demonstrating her uniquely gifted memory – enumerates here all her little companions’ names!) «How could I so suddenly let down all those girls, who seemed not to know how to enjoy themselves without my company, and make them understand that I had to stop going to these gatherings once and for all?

«God inspired Francisco with the answer: “Do you know how you could do it? Everybody knows that Our Lady has appeared to you. Therefore, you can say that you have promised Her not to dance any more, and for this reason you are not going! Then, on such days, *we can run away and hide in the cave on the Cabeço! Up there nobody will find us.*”

«I accepted his suggestion, and once I had made my decision, nobody else thought of organizing any such gathering. God’s blessing was with us. Those friends of mine, who until then sought me out to have me join in their amusements, now followed my example, and came to my home on Saturday afternoons to ask me to go with them to pray the Rosary in the Cova da Iria.»⁸³

From now on, the children would flee from too noisy companions. What they sought above all was solitude. There, in the blessed hollow where the Angel appeared to them, either at Arneiro near the well, or near the hollow of Cabeço, they could not be found by curious and nosy people. They were in prayer for long hours, prostrate, and repeating the prayers of the Angel.

«Once the apparitions on each 13th of the month were over, he said to us on the eve of every following 13th: “Look! Early tomorrow morning, I’m making my escape out through the back garden to the cave on the Cabeço. As soon as you can, come and join me there.”»⁸⁴

II. A COMPASSIONATE HEART

Just as he was sensitive to the “sorrow” of God, Francisco was also sensitive to the needs of the sick and the suffering. In a few brief episodes from the Memoirs, Lucy shows how good and charitable her cousin was.

«Thereabouts, lived an old woman called Ti Maria Carreira, whose sons sent her out sometimes to take care of their goats and sheep. The animals were rather wild, and often strayed away in different directions. Whenever we met Ti Maria in these straits, Francisco was the first to run to her aid. He helped her to lead the flock to pasture, chased after the stray ones and gathered them all together again. The poor old woman overwhelmed Francisco with her thanks and called him her dear guardian angel.»⁸⁵

Francisco was not only eager to help people, he also had a tender heart, full of affection, with an extraordinary inclination for pity and compassion. One anecdote Sister Lucy relates for us illustrates very well this dominant trait of his character, which was reinforced still more by the grace of the apparitions:

«When we came across any sick people, he was filled with compassion and said: “I can’t bear to see them, as I feel so sorry for them! Tell them I’ll pray for them.”

«When we were called to speak to people who were looking for us, he would ask if they were sick and say: *“If they’re sick, I’m not going! they cause me too much suffering! Tell them I’m praying for them.”*

«One day, they wanted to take us to Montelo, to the home of a man called Joaquim Chapeleta. Francisco did not want to go. “I’m not going, because I can’t bear to see people who want to speak and cannot.” (The man’s mother was dumb.)»⁸⁶

What a loving and sensitive heart he demonstrates here! For from compassion he passes to acts of charity. Indeed, one of his virtues was the seriousness and intensity with which he set about praying for those who had confided their intentions to him. Lucy gives many other touching examples of this in the Memoirs.

A FAITHFUL AND EFFICACIOUS INTERCESSOR

Here is one episode which gives a marvellous picture of the atmosphere in which the children lived, in the period following the apparitions. Sister Lucy records it:

«One day, we were just outside Aljustrel, on our way to the Cova da Iria, when a group of people came upon us by surprise around the bend in the road. In order to see and hear us better, they set Jacinta and myself on top of a wall. Francisco refused to let himself be put there, as though he were afraid of falling. Then, little by little, he edged his way out and leaned against a dilapidated wall on the opposite side.

«A poor woman and her son, seeing that they could not manage to speak to us personally, as they wished, went and knelt down in front of Francisco. They begged him to obtain from Our Lady the grace that the father of the family would be cured and that he would not have to go to the war. *Francisco knelt down also, took off his cap, and asked if they would like to pray the Rosary with him. They said they would, and began to pray. Very soon, all those people stopped asking curious questions, and also went down on their knees to pray. After that, they went with us to the Cova da Iria, reciting a Rosary along the way. Once there, we said another Rosary, and then they went away, quite happy.* The poor woman promised to come back and thank Our Lady for the graces she had asked for, if they were granted.

«She came back several times, accompanied not only by her son but also her husband, who had by now recovered. (They came from the parish of St. Mamede, and we called them the Casaleiros).»⁸⁷

When prayers were requested of him, Francisco always kept his promise: he would pray with all his heart, and he would always obtain the grace requested.

III. «I WANT TO DIE AND GO TO HEAVEN!»

During the apparition of June 13, Lucy had made a request, a request as full of daring as it was of love: «I would like to ask you to take us to Heaven.» The kind Virgin deigned to give a clear answer: «Yes, I will take Francisco and Jacinta soon.» From now on they knew what their future would be: Jacinta and Francisco knew that they did not have very long to live in this world.⁸⁸

This certitude of going to Heaven – which was transformed into a courageous acceptance, and then a firm act of the will, a heroic decision – along with the consideration of the immense sorrow of God is what best explains the behaviour of Francisco, and the amazing progress he made in such little time. For only eighteen months passed between the apparition of October 13 and the day of his death.

“I DON’T WANT TO DO ANYTHING... I WANT TO DIE AND GO TO HEAVEN!” We have many moving testimonies of this clear knowledge concerning their future, demonstrated by Jacinta and Francisco. Ti Marto relates the following anecdote, recorded by Father de Marchi:

«One day, two ladies were talking to Francisco. They wanted to know what career he would choose when he grew up.

«“Do you want to be a carpenter?” one of them asked. “No, ma’am.” Another said: “A soldier, then?” “No, ma’am.” “Would you like to be a doctor?” “Not that either.” “I know what you’d like to be... a priest! To say Mass... hear confessions, preach... isn’t that true?” “No, ma’am, I don’t want to be a priest.” “Then what do you want to be?” “*I don’t want to be anything!... I want to die and go to Heaven.*”

«Ti Marto, who was present at this conversation, offered his own comment: “Now there was a real decision!...”»⁸⁹

“A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, AND THEN I’LL GO TO HEAVEN!” Everything Francisco ever said bore witness to this fact: he was anxious to go to Heaven soon, but like the true mystic he was already, he was not thinking only of his own joy, but that of Jesus as well: «Soon (he exclaimed) Jesus will come to look for me to take me to Heaven with Him, and then I will be *with Him always to see Him and console Him*. What happiness!»⁹⁰

While he waited for this day, whenever possible he used to go down on his knees before the Tabernacle:

«Sometimes on the way to school, before we reached Fatima, Francisco would say to me: “Listen! While you go to school, *I’ll stay with the Hidden Jesus. It’s not worth it for me to learn to read. Soon I will go to Heaven. When you come back, come and look for me here.*”

«The Blessed Sacrament was kept at that time near the entrance of the church, on the left side, as the church was undergoing repairs. Francisco went over there, between the baptismal font and the altar, and that was where I found him on my return.»⁹¹

At this time the three seers were no longer of any use around the house – indeed, since autumn of 1918 the family flock had been sold – and so they could go more often to school at Fatima. Francisco had begun going to school – although no doubt very rarely – between February and July of 1918. We know this through one of his fellow students who became a priest, Father Antonio dos Reis, whom Francisco had begun to go around with, albeit doubtless infrequently, between February and July 1917.

Francisco was very much behind in his studies. After the apparitions, he had to endure persecution and sarcastic remarks from his teacher, a man devoid of either faith or morals, who treated the boy as a lazy, false visionary. Father dos Reis adds that his schoolmates would gang up on him, and the poor boy would have to spend recreation pinned to a wall, to try to defend himself against the ill-treatment which the stronger and harder ones did not hesitate to inflict on him.⁹² Did this ill-treatment continue when Francisco returned to school after October, 1917? We do not know.

In any case, during the process of beatification, the “devil’s advocate” surely did not fail to bring forth this testimony to call into question the disinterestedness of our seer... For when Francisco spent long hours at the foot of the Tabernacle when school was going on, was it not an “escape” for him, to get away from the insults he was suffering there? As natural as this hypothesis might seem, it is groundless. For we know that far from complaining, Francisco, always humble, gentle and patient, put up with all these affronts without saying anything, even to the point that his parents never found out about it. However, all he had to do to put an end to this unjust persecution was to tell his father, who would have stepped in. For that matter, perhaps, his father would have excused him from going to school. Indeed at that time, for young peasant children, going to school was not mandatory at all; parents never sent their children there unless they had nothing useful for them to do at the house. Thus the context is quite different from our own; it explains the liberty our seer took in choosing to remain at the foot of the Tabernacle rather than go to school. In acting this way he considered himself disobedient neither to Our Lady nor his own parents.

A precise recollection on Sister Lucy's part shows that when he went to church, it was not to take the easy way out, or to get out of school, but in a courageous spirit he wished to do everything he could to console Our Lord:

«On another occasion, as we left the house, I noticed that Francisco was walking very slowly: "What's the matter?" I asked him. "You seem unable to walk!" "I've such a bad headache, and I feel as though I'm going to fall." "Then don't come. Stay at home!" *"I don't want to. I'd rather stay in the church with the Hidden Jesus, while you go to school."*»⁹³

"I'LL STAY WITH THE HIDDEN JESUS, AND I'LL ASK HIM FOR THAT GRACE..." Sometimes, to intercede more at length and more fervently in favour of those who had requested it, Francisco would decide to spend the whole morning before the Tabernacle, as Sister Lucy relates:

«He came out of the house one day and met me with my sister Teresa, who was already married and living in Lomba. Another woman from a nearby hamlet had asked her to come to me about her son who had been accused of some crime which I no longer remember, and if he could not prove his innocence he was to be condemned, either to exile or to a term of some years' imprisonment. Teresa asked me insistently, in the name of the poor woman for whom she wished to do such a favour, to plead for this grace with Our Lady.

«Having received the message, I set out for school, and on the way, I told my cousins all about it. When we reached Fatima, Francisco said to me: *"Listen! While you go to school, I'll stay with the Hidden Jesus, I'll ask Him for that grace."*

«When I came out of school, I went to call him and asked: "Did you pray to Our Lord to grant that grace?" "Yes, I did. *Tell your sister Teresa that he'll be home in a few days' time.*"

«And indeed, a few days later, the poor boy returned home. On the 13th, he and his entire family came to thank Our Lady for the grace they had received.»⁹⁴

How did Francisco know that his prayer had been heard? We do not know. In any case, on that day he showed signs of the assurance the saints show when

they prophesy or perform miracles... Thus he demonstrated his own intimacy with God and the profound self-denial which it presupposes...

«I will suffer everything Our Lady wants», he said again; «what I want is to go to Heaven.» Such words are precious pearls which introduce us right away to the essence of the Message of Fatima: Yes, Heaven first! Only Heaven counts, because it is the final end to which we are all destined! To desire, in all truthfulness and sincerity of soul, nothing more than to “*go to Heaven*” – is this not to already have made the sacrifice of all creatures and one’s whole life? Is it not already true sanctity? Having reached this stage, Francisco was ready for the final sacrifices.

IV. AN EXEMPLARY PATIENT (OCTOBER 1918 - APRIL 1919)

The prophetic words Our Lady had pronounced on May 13, in response to the generous offering of Her three confidants, was fulfilled to the letter: «*You will have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort*», She had foretold to them. And in fact, after this promise was made, the greatest joys were mingled with tears for the three shepherds. If they remained happy and smiling, it is because they knew how to accept with a good heart all the sufferings which the Lord had sent them.

After the persecutions, and the trial of non-stop interrogations, there now followed a heavier cross, that of sickness.

THE FIRST MONTHS OF SICKNESS: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1918

Towards the end of October 1918 – only a year had gone by since the last apparitions – Jacinta, who was still only eight, and Francisco, who was only ten, came down at about the same time with a terrible case of influenza. The epidemic originated in Spain and was then ravaging almost all of Europe. It was particularly deadly in Portugal. Usually the malady rapidly developed into bronchial pneumonia, as was the case with Jacinta and Francisco.

Soon everybody was sick in the Marto house, and at the same time. Only Ti Manuel and his son John were left standing. Then finally, Ti Marto was left all alone to care for his entire household... What a trial! «(But the finger of God

showed itself even there», he confided later on. «God helped me... I never had to ask anybody for money.»⁹⁵

Luckily, after a few weeks, everything went back to normal. Francisco and Jacinta got better, and they could get up again. But there was only a brief time of respite, for on December 23, Francisco and Jacinta fell gravely ill again.⁹⁶ «The force of the illness was so violent», recalled their mother Olimpia, «that this time Francisco especially could not even move any more.» For fifteen days he was struck by an intense fever.

A HEROIC PATIENCE. In spite of everything, Lucy reports, «*he always appeared joyful and content*. I asked him sometimes: “Are you suffering a lot, Francisco?” “Quite a lot, but never mind! *I am suffering to console Our Lord*, and afterwards, within a short time, I am going to Heaven!”»⁹⁷

In another passage of the Memoirs, Sister Lucy recalls:

«During his illness, he suffered with heroic patience, without ever letting the slightest moan or the least complaint escape his lips. One day, shortly before his death, I asked him: “Are you suffering a lot, Francisco?” “Yes, but I suffer it all for love of Our Lord and Our Lady.”

«One day, he gave me the rope that I have already spoken about, saying: “Take it away before my mother sees it. I don’t feel able to wear it any more around my waist.”

«He took everything his mother offered him, and she could never discover which things he disliked. He went on like this until the day came for him to go to Heaven.»⁹⁸

His mother Olimpia, for her part, told Father de Marchi:

«The child took all the medicine I gave him. He never made a fuss. I never could figure out what pleased him. Poor child!... Even bitter medicines he drank without making a face. Thus, we thought he would get over the sickness. But why?... He kept saying that it was all useless, that Our Lady would come to take him to Heaven.»⁹⁹

«OUR LADY CAME TO SEE US»

Indeed, the Blessed Virgin came to visit Her two privileged ones, and renew to them Her promise of June 13, 1917:

«In the meantime Jacinta's health improved somewhat. She could get up and she spent the day seated at her little brother's bed.

«One day she called for me, telling me to come over to her right away. As I ran over, she told me: "Our Lady came to see us, and She said that *She would come to take Francisco soon, to take him to Heaven*"...»¹⁰⁰

As for Jacinta, as we will see later on, she was to remain a little while longer, to continue to suffer and to convert more sinners.

Did this apparition perhaps take place around Christmas 1918? From then on, Francisco knew that the day of his departure for Heaven was quite near.

«HE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HIS DESTINY WAS!»

"OUR LADY WILL COME TO TAKE ME SOON." «In the middle of January, his mother recalls, he began to get better for the second time, even to where he could get up. We were all happy over that. He, himself, knew otherwise, and he kept repeating the same thing; "Our Lady will come to take me soon."

«"You will get well, Francisco, you'll be a robust man!" his father would say to him... But the child would repeat, with assurance and serenity: "Before long Our Lady will come to take me." His father would try furtively, to wipe away the tears from his eyes with the back of his calloused hands; those same eyes which were fatigued from so many sleepless nights. "Lights from on high!" he murmured.

«"If Our Lady heals you", said his godmother Teresa, "I promise to offer Her your weight in wheat!" "It's not worth the trouble", Francisco answered with a gentle smile. "Our Lady will not grant you this grace."»¹⁰¹

All these firmly worded answers of Francisco concerning his future were pronounced with «a mysterious aura and an impressive tone». ¹⁰²

“HE SAID NOTHING, LOOKING A LITTLE SAD.” Francisco was certain of going to Heaven soon, and being reunited with Our Lord and Our Lady. No doubt this filled our little seer with an immense supernatural joy. But we should not be mistaken: this joy was not always a palpable one, and the wonderful promise of Our Lady demanded on his part an act of heroic love, an act which is so contrary to nature, and consists in making the sacrifice of our own life. If there were moments of luminous joy and luminous hope, there were other moments when all feelings of joy disappeared: at those times he saw nothing but the sacrifices he had to accept to fulfil God’s designs. Here is one such moving incident, which Ti Marto told Father de Marchi:

«I remember once that he went out and fetched a small basket of olives and then sat on a bench and began to cut them. “Francisco”, I said, “how nice to see you work; do you feel better?” *But he said nothing, looking a little sad.* He clearly foresaw that, despite everything, he was going to die... “He knew exactly what his destiny was”, Olimpia concluded.»¹⁰³

THE LAST PILGRIMAGE TO THE COVA DA IRIA. In the short space of time when he began to feel a little better, the middle of January to early February, he was able to go to the Cova da Iria. We can imagine what an emotional experience it was. He knew that it was the last time he would visit this blessed place!

«And in fact, a few days later, he returned to bed never to rise from it again. His condition became steadily worse until his parents at last realized that they would lose him. Every encouraging word of theirs brought forth the same reply: “It’s no use. Our Lady wants me in Heaven with Her.”

«*And yet he was so cheerful, so happy and smiling that the illusion remained until the end.* The high fever was gradually and implacably undermining his enfeebled body until only a thread held him to earth.»¹⁰⁴

THE CONSOLER OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY

As soon as she finished her household chores, Lucy would go to her cousins’ house to keep them company. The other two kept no secrets from Lucy.

The constant thought and ideal of Francisco was always the same. He wanted to

offer all his prayers and sufferings to console Our Lord and Our Lady:

«When Jacinta and I went into his room one day, he said to us: “Don’t talk much today, as my head aches so badly.” “Don’t forget to make the offering for sinners”, Jacinta reminded him. “Yes. *But first I make it to console Our Lord and Our Lady*, and then, afterwards, for sinners and for the Holy Father.”»¹⁰⁵

He was quite conscious of the fact that his special role was that of consoler of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. This was to be his vocation here below and in eternity. For if he desired to go to Heaven, it was to be able to console Them that much better:

«On another occasion, I found him very happy when I arrived. “Are you better?” “No. I feel worse. It won’t be long now till I go to Heaven. *When I’m there, I’m going to console Our Lord and Our Lady very much*. Jacinta is going to pray a lot for sinners, for the Holy Father and for you. You will stay here, because Our Lord wants it that way. Listen, you must do everything that She tells you.»¹⁰⁶

His greatest regret was that he could no longer spend long hours before the Tabernacle, as he once did, to console the “Hidden Jesus”.

«Later, when he fell ill, he often told me, when I called in to see him on my way to school: “Look! Go to the church and give my love to the Hidden Jesus. What hurts me most is that I cannot go there myself and stay awhile with the Hidden Jesus.”

«When I arrived at the house one day, I said goodbye to a group of school children who had come with me, and I went in to pay a visit to him and his sister. As he had heard all the noise, he asked me: “Did you come with all that crowd?” “Yes, I did.” “Don’t go with them, because you might learn to commit sins. When you come out of school, *go and stay for a little while near the Hidden Jesus, and afterwards come home by yourself*.”»¹⁰⁷

What supernatural wisdom and what love of God is this brotherly suggestion! It manifests a soul already utterly imbued with the presence of God, completely transformed by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So as not to lose this Divine Presence, Francisco preferred to be alone:

«If he was asked whether he wanted some of the children to stay with him and keep him company, he used to say that he preferred not, as he liked to be alone. He would say to me sometimes: “I just like having you here, and Jacinta too.”»¹⁰⁸

Indeed their presence did not deprive him of the presence of God. Together, they could pray, or speak about Heaven and the words of Our Lady.

THE RADIANCE OF SANCTITY

«When grown-ups came to see him, he remained silent, only answering when directly questioned, and then in as few words as possible. People who came to visit him, whether they were neighbours or strangers, often spent long periods sitting by his bedside, and remarked: “*I don’t know what it is about Francisco, but it feels so good to be here!*”

«Some women from the village commented on this one day to my aunt and my mother, after having spent quite a long time in Francisco’s room: “It’s a mystery one cannot fathom! They are children just like any others, they don’t say anything to us, and yet in their presence *one feels something one can’t explain, and that makes them different from all the rest.*” “*It seems to me that when we go into Francisco’s room, we feel just as we do when we go into a church*”, said one of my aunt’s neighbours, a woman named Romana, who apparently did not believe in the apparitions. There were three others in this group also: the wives of Manuel Faustino, José Marto, and José Silva.¹⁰⁹

Lucy goes on to explain this astonishing influence exercised by her companions over their visitors by their simple presence, their attitudes and the few words they spoke, for Jacinta spoke more readily than her older brother:

«I am not surprised that people felt like that, being accustomed to finding in everyone else only the preoccupation with material things which goes with an empty, superficial life. Indeed, the very sight of these children was enough to draw their minds *to our Heavenly Mother*, with whom the children were believed to be in communication; *to eternity*, for they saw

how eager, joyful and happy they were at the thought of going there; *to God*, for they said that they loved Him more than their own parents; and even *to hell*, for the children warned them that people would go there if they continued to commit sin.»¹¹⁰

Eternity, Heaven and hell, the love of our Father and our Heavenly Mother – here lay the whole Message of Fatima which they lived so profoundly, whose light they reflected, and which they preached by their whole life. What a testimony!

A SAINT WHO WORKS MIRACLES. In her Memoirs, Sister Lucy reports several cases where true miracles of grace were worked through the prayer of the little seer.

One day, a woman from Alqueidao came to ask for the healing of a sick person and the conversion of a sinner. Since Lucy and Jacinta had the time to hide, fleeing the company of the group of visitors, Francisco received them alone in his bedroom. He promised to pray.

Not long after his death, the same woman returned to Aljustrel. She asked where Francisco's tomb was, for she wished to thank him for the two graces which she had asked for and obtained through his intercession.¹¹¹ Then Lucy mentions another case.

«A woman called Mariana, from Casa Velha, came one day into Francisco's room. She was most upset because her husband had driven their son out of the house, and she was asking for the grace that her son would be reconciled with his father. Francisco said to her in reply: *“Don't worry. I'm going to Heaven very soon, and when I get there I will ask Our Lady for that grace.”*

«I do not recall just how many days remained before he took his flight to Heaven, but what I do remember is that, *on the very afternoon of Francisco's death*, the son went to ask pardon of his father, who had previously refused it because his son would not submit to the conditions imposed. The boy accepted everything that the father demanded, and peace reigned once again in that home. This boy's sister, Leocadia by name, later married a brother of Francisco and Jacinta.»¹¹²

Once again, Francisco had shown himself to be a faithful intercessor.

V. THE DEATH OF A SAINT

«Suddenly Francisco's condition grew worse. He could no longer cough up the phlegm; his throat became blocked; the fever grew worse; only with difficulty could he take any medicine; the weakness and exhaustion grew rapidly, giving away the fact that the end was near.»¹¹³

In barely six months, the terrible malady had overcome his robust health. At one time Francisco recited as many as seven or eight Rosaries a day – a fact which Olimpia confirmed – but now he was so weak that evening would come before he had the strength to say just one. This greatly afflicted Francisco. No longer being able to pray, he felt that the end was near and he asked Father Ferreira to let him receive Holy Communion before he died.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2: «I AM GOING TO CONFESSION SO THAT I CAN RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION AND THEN DIE.»

As Mr. Marto went to the presbytery he recited the Rosary on the way, overcome with anguish and desolation. Would the implacable Father Ferreira finally grant to his poor Francisco the favour of being able to receive Communion? Had he not excluded Francisco from the Holy Table yet again in May 1918, on the pretext that the boy was still unsure of a point concerning the Creed? Ti Marto remembered how Francisco had come back to the house in tears.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, on April 2, 1919, the parish priest of Fatima was surely touched, and he agreed to come without delay, the very same day, to visit the poor dying boy.

“TELL ME IF YOU HAVE SEEN ME COMMIT ANY SIN...” In the meantime, Francisco prepared himself, and with what seriousness! He wanted to be sure that he had confessed all his faults, without forgetting a single one. It was still early in the morning when he sent his sister Teresa to get Lucy:

«“Come quickly to our house! Francisco is very bad, and he says he wants to tell you something.” I dressed as fast as I could, and went over there. He asked his mother and brothers and sisters to leave the room, saying that he

wanted to tell me a secret. They went out, and he said to me: “*I am going to confession so that I can receive Holy Communion and then die.* I want you to tell me if you have seen me commit any sin, and then go and ask Jacinta if she has seen me commit any.” “You disobeyed your mother a few times, when she told you to stay at home, and you ran off to be with me, or to go and hide.” “That’s true. I remember that. Now go and ask Jacinta if she remembers anything else.”

«I went, and Jacinta thought for a while, and answered: “Well, tell him that before Our Lady appeared to us, he stole a coin from our father to buy a music box from José Marto of Casa Velha; and when the boys from Aljustrel threw stones at those from Boleiros, he threw some too!”

«When I gave him this message from his sister, he answered: “I’ve confessed those, but I’ll do so again. Maybe, it is because of these sins that I committed that Our Lord is so sad! But even if I don’t die, I’ll never commit them again. I’m heartily sorry for them now.” Joining his hands, he recited the prayer: “O my Jesus, forgive us, deliver us from the fire of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need.”

«Then he said: “Now listen, you must also ask Our Lord to forgive me my sins.” “I’ll ask that, don’t worry. If Our Lord had not forgiven them already, Our Lady would not have told Jacinta the other day that She was coming soon to take you to Heaven. Now, I’m going to Mass, and there I’ll pray to the Hidden Jesus for you.” “Then, please ask Him to let the parish priest give me Holy Communion.” (He also was apprehensive; not having made his First Communion in church, he was afraid of being refused again.)

«When I returned from the church, Jacinta had already got up and was sitting on his bed. As soon as Francisco saw me, he asked: “Did you ask the Hidden Jesus for the parish priest to give me Holy Communion?” “I did.” “Then, in Heaven, I’ll pray for you...” Then I left them, and went off to my usual daily tasks of lessons and work.

«When I returned in the evening, I found him radiant with joy. He had made his confession, and the parish priest had promised to bring him Holy Communion the next day.»¹¹⁵

Francisco was exultant. The moment he so ardently desired had arrived. For the

first time since his miraculous Communion at the Cabeço, he was going to receive his “Hidden Jesus”, at whose feet he had spent so many hours in silence. Given his sickness, of course, he could have been dispensed from the fast. But no! He wished to offer this one last sacrifice: «He made his mother promise that she would not give him anything after midnight so that he could receive Communion fasting, like everybody else.»¹¹⁶

THURSDAY, APRIL 3: HOLY VIATICUM

Here is Father de Marchi’s account of the recollections of the Marto family:

«Finally came the dawn of April 3. It was a beautiful spring day... When Francisco heard the sound of the bell announcing the arrival of the King of Heaven, he wanted to seat himself on his bed; however, he was too weak, and he fell back on his pillow. “You can remain lying down to receive Our Lord”, his godmother Teresa told him. She had come specially to attend the first and last Communion of her godson...

«Near the bed, the two little children (Lucy and Jacinta) were kneeling with sadness, but also with holy jealousy. Jesus was coming to take their companion away, and usher him into Heaven. After receiving the Host on his parched tongue, Francisco closed his eyes, and remained motionless for a long time... The first words he pronounced were to say to his mother: “Will Father bring me the Hidden Jesus once again?”¹¹⁷

«I don’t know», she answered, undoubtedly sensing that this first Communion would also be his Viaticum.

Francisco, however, was still overcome with joy. He said to his little sister: «I am happier than you are, because I have the Hidden Jesus within my heart. I’m going to Heaven, but I’m going to pray very much to Our Lord and Our Lady for Them to bring you both there soon.»¹¹⁸

HIS LAST WORDS

«That day I spent almost the whole night by his bedside with Jacinta (Lucy recalled). Since he could no longer pray, he asked us to recite the Rosary for

him.»



“I WILL MISS YOU TERRIBLY IN HEAVEN!” Francisco could still exchange a few words with Lucy and Jacinta. The thought of having to leave them seemed to put a damper on his joy. Already he cherished them so much! Lucy records this charming dialogue: “I am sure I shall miss you terribly in Heaven! If only Our Lady would bring you there soon, also!” “You won’t miss me! Just imagine! And you right there with Our Lord and Our Lady! They are so good!” “That’s true! Perhaps, I won’t remember!”»¹¹⁹

“I’M AFRAID I’LL FORGET... MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE I WANT TO CONSOLE HIM!” In still another place, Lucy writes: «The day before he died, he said to me: “Look! I am very ill; it won’t be long now before I go to Heaven.” “Then listen to this. When you’re there, don’t forget to pray a great deal for sinners, for the Holy Father, for me and for Jacinta.” “Yes, I’ll pray. But look, you’d better ask Jacinta to pray for these things instead, *because I’m afraid I’ll forget when I see Our Lord. And then, more than anything else, I want to console Him.*”»¹²⁰

Is it childish simplicity, charming candour? Be that as it may, it still moves the Heart of God and greatly consoles it. For Jesus Himself said: «Suffer the little ones to come to Me; do not prevent them, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Truly I say to you, whoever does not humble himself as this little child, shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Then He blessed them and imposed His Hands upon them.»¹²¹

THE LAST FAREWELLS. During the day, Francisco's condition worsened alarmingly. «He was thirsty but he could no longer take any milk, or even the spoonfuls of water which he was given from time to time. If his mother or his godmother asked him how he felt, he answered: "All right; I have no pain.»¹²² Lucy writes:

«That night I said goodbye to him. "Goodbye, Francisco! If you go to Heaven tonight, don't forget me when you get there, do you hear me?" "No, I won't forget. Be sure of that."

«Then, seizing my right hand, he held it tightly for a long time, looking at me with tears in his eyes. "Do you want anything more?" I asked him, with tears running down my cheeks, too. "No!" he answered in a low voice, quite overcome. As the scene was becoming so moving, my aunt told me to leave the room. "Goodbye then, Francisco! Till we meet in Heaven, goodbye!..."»¹²³

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 1919: «HE DIED SMILING»

On Friday, everything indicated that his end was near. He still had the strength to ask pardon of his godmother for the few times he had caused her some little trouble during his life, and to ask for her blessing.

Later, when night had fallen completely, he called his mother and said: «Mother, look!... What a lovely light, there, by the door!» And after a few minutes: «Now I can't see it any more...»¹²⁴

At about ten o'clock in the evening, his countenance lighted up in an angelic smile, and without the slightest trace of suffering, without any agony or groans, he died calmly. «He took his flight to Heaven in the arms of his Heavenly Mother», Lucy writes.¹²⁵ During the parochial investigation, his mother declared, «*He seemed to smile, then he stopped breathing.*» As for Francisco's father, he declared: «*He died smiling.*»

«HUMILITY GOETH BEFORE GLORY...»

On Saturday, April 5, a modest funeral procession conducted Francisco's body to

the cemetery of Fatima. Lucy followed, in tears, while Jacinta, herself also sick and in tears, kept to her room.

The ceremony was without any pomp or affluence, just like Francisco's humble and hidden life. His burial reflected his poverty, in a simple grave, marked only by a wooden cross. On March 13, 1952, his mortal remains were transferred to the basilica of Fatima, where they repose today, waiting to be presented to the faithful after his canonization¹²⁶ – a canonization ardently desired not only by Sister Lucy herself, but by a multitude of souls who have received great graces through his intercession.

THE LESSON OF SUCH A BRIEF LIFE: «A SECURE, EASY, SHORT AND PERFECT WAY.»¹²⁷

On June 13, 1917, Our Lady had promised, «Jacinta and Francisco, I will take them soon...» The “faithful Virgin” kept Her word... Francisco had been filled to the brim with graces from each one of Her visits, sanctified by the innumerable Rosaries he had recited, absorbed with the thought of consoling the Hidden Jesus, and purified, finally, by the sufferings imposed by illness. He was already prepared to go to Heaven, and the Blessed Virgin could come and take him. He was not yet eleven years old, and since the last apparition at the Cova da Iria only one and a half years had gone by! Thus in all truth we can apply to him the beautiful maxim of St. Louis de Montfort: «One advances more in a short time by submission and dependence on Mary, than by long years of following our own will and relying on ourselves.»¹²⁸ By granting to Her witnesses the extraordinary grace of such a precocious sanctity, Our Lady of Fatima demonstrated that She is indeed the Mediatrix of all graces, the Queen and Gate of Heaven.¹²⁹

ON THE DEATH OF FRANCISCO, SEE APPENDIX I, AT THE END OF THIS VOLUME.

CHAPTER IV

JACINTA:

«I WANT TO SUFFER... TO SAVE SOULS FROM HELL!» (OCTOBER 1917 - FEBRUARY 20, 1920)

Jacinta was very different from Francisco in character and temperament. She was even more different in her spiritual physiognomy. What a contrast between the brother and the sister! By a wonderful design of Providence, it seems that each one had the mission of living to the full one of the two complementary aspects of the Message of Our Lady.

TO CONSOLE GOD AND CONVERT SOULS

Francisco, who had a contemplative soul, was fascinated above all by the sadness of God and Our Lady, and what he wanted above all was to have compassion on Their pain, to console Them by his loving prayer. Jacinta also had a tender and affectionate heart, but seized with fright at the sight of so many souls falling into the fire of hell, she wished to make reparation in every possible way for their crimes, and obtain the grace of their conversion from the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She wanted to save them from eternal damnation at any price: «Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them!» These words of Our Lady confirmed Jacinta in her ideal and primary objective. With an unlimited generosity, she was to give herself over to heroic prayer and sacrifice, for the conversion of sinners.

If Francisco strived to be the consoler of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Jacinta wanted to be their cooperatrix. Her dominant thought, the thought that haunted her and animated all her supernatural activity, was the salvation of souls, an ardent thirst for their conversion, in short, *missionary zeal*. In one sentence Sister Lucy summed up this difference in their vocations, which in fact is illustrated on every page of her Memoirs: «While Jacinta seemed to be solely concerned with the one thought of *converting sinners* and saving souls from going to hell, Francisco appeared to think only of *consoling Our Lord and Our Lady*, Who had seemed to him to be so sad.»¹³⁰

I. HAUNTED BY ONE THOUGHT: THE SALVATION OF SOULS

We have already quoted¹³¹ some striking passages from the Memoirs, where Sister Lucy recalls how the mind of her little cousin was obsessed, so to speak, by the thought of so many souls in danger of being lost.

What we must show now is how these images of the vision of July 13, which were engraved on her memory forever, incited her to the heroic practice of sacrifice. Sister Lucy observes:

«Some of the things revealed in the Secret made a very strong impression on Jacinta. This was indeed the case. The vision of hell filled her with horror to such a degree that *every penance and mortification was as nothing in her eyes, if it could only prevent souls from going there.*»¹³²

Then Sister Lucy asks:

«How is it that Jacinta, small as she was, let herself be possessed by *such a spirit of penance and mortification*, and understood it so well? I think the reason is this: firstly, God willed to bestow on her a special grace, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and secondly, it was *because she had looked upon hell, and had seen the ruin of souls who fall therein.*»¹³³

«Jacinta (Sister Lucy goes on to observe) took this matter of making sacrifices for the conversion of sinners so much to heart, that she never let a single opportunity escape her.»¹³⁴

SACRIFICES FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS

How can we resist the pleasure of citing some new examples of these numerous sacrifices with which Jacinta would strive to pack her days?¹³⁵ The account traced for us by Sister Lucy is so charming, so spontaneous!

“JACINTA NEVER FORGOT SINNERS.” «We were playing one day at the well I have already mentioned. Close to it, there was a grape vine belonging to Jacinta’s mother. She cut a few clusters and brought them to us to eat. But Jacinta never forgot her sinners. “*We won’t eat them,*” she said, “*we’ll offer this sacrifice for sinners.*”

«Then she ran out with the grapes and gave them to the other children playing on the road. She returned radiant with joy, for she had found our poor children, and given them grapes.

«Another time, my aunt called us to come and eat some figs which she had brought home, and indeed they would have given anybody an appetite. Jacinta sat down happily next to the basket, with the rest of us, and picked up the first fig. She was just about to eat it, when she suddenly remembered, and said: *“It’s true! Today we haven’t yet made a single sacrifice for sinners! We’ll have to make this one.”* She put the fig back in the basket, and made the offering; and we, too, left our figs in the basket *for the conversion of sinners.»*¹³⁶

“I’M NOT GOING TO DANCE ANY MORE!” «Jacinta dearly loved dancing, and had a special aptitude for it. I remember how she was crying one day about one of her brothers who had gone to the war and was reported killed in action. To distract her, I arranged a little dance with two of her brothers. There was the poor child dancing away as she dried the tears that ran down her cheeks.

«Her fondness for dancing was such that the sound of some shepherd playing his instrument was enough to set her dancing all by herself. In spite of this, when St. John’s Day festivities or carnival time came around (in 1918), she announced: “I’m not going to dance any more.” “And why not?” *“Because I want to offer this sacrifice to Our Lord.”*

«Since we were the ones who organized the games for the children, the dances which used to take place on these occasions stopped.»¹³⁷

“I AM SO THIRSTY, YET I DO NOT WANT TO TAKE A DRINK!” «Occasionally, also, we were in the habit of offering to God the sacrifice of spending nine days or a month without taking a drink. Once, we made this sacrifice even in the month of August, when the heat was suffocating.

«On these occasions, Jacinta would say: “Our Lord must be pleased with our sacrifices, because I am so thirsty, so thirsty! Yet, I do not want to take a drink. I want to suffer for love of Him.”»¹³⁸

«*Jacinta’s thirst for making sacrifices seemed insatiable*», Lucy remarked.¹³⁹

She always made her sacrifices with this thought, a thought which was habitual with her: to suffer for sinners, to make acts of reparation in their place, to substitute herself for them, to obtain for them pardon and the grace of conversion. This untiring zeal for the salvation of souls, pushed even to the point of heroic charity, appears in many subsequent episodes found in the Memoirs:

«When, in a spirit of mortification, she did not want to eat, I said to her: “Listen, Jacinta! Come and eat now.” “*No! I’m offering this sacrifice for sinners who eat too much.*”

«When she was ill, and yet went to Mass on a week day, I urged her: “Jacinta, don’t come! You’re not able. Besides, today is not a Sunday!” “*That doesn’t matter. I’m going for sinners who don’t go on a Sunday.*”

«If she happened to hear any of those expressions which some people make a show of uttering, she covered her face with her hands and said: “Oh, my God, don’t those people realize that they can go to hell for saying those things? My Jesus, forgive them and convert them. They certainly don’t know that they are offending God by all this! What a pity, my Jesus! I’ll pray for them.” Then and there, she repeated the prayer that Our Lady had taught us: “O my Jesus, forgive us, deliver us from the fire of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need.”»¹⁴⁰

«Jacinta made such sacrifices over and over again, but I won’t stop to tell any more, or I shall never end», Lucy tells us.¹⁴¹ What a loving and generous heart is revealed to us in such a testimony! And what miracles of grace in a child of seven or eight! Such precociousness assumes a very special predilection on the part of God, which was indeed the child’s lot. In this, as in more than one trait of her character, she resembles Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus.

II. THE CONFIDANTE OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Lucy had remarked previously that in her own opinion, «Jacinta was the one who received from Our Lady *a greater abundance of grace*, and a better knowledge of God and of virtue.»¹⁴² Although she was indeed the youngest of the three seers, it was she who appeared to enjoy the greatest intimacy with the Most Holy Virgin. When the cycle of the six great public apparitions was completed, Jacinta continued almost uninterruptedly to enjoy supernatural

favours, right up until her death.

NEW VISITS FROM THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Through the official report which Father Ferreira drew up concerning the events of Fatima, we know that the Blessed Virgin appeared to her at least three times, in the short space of time between October 13, 1917 and August 6, 1918, the date on which the parish priest of Fatima completed his Memoir. According to this report:

«Jacinta affirms that Our Lady appeared to her another three times. The first time was in the church at Fatima, during Mass, on Ascension Thursday. *At that time Our Lady taught her how to say the Rosary.* The second time was at night, at the door of the cellar, while the whole family was sleeping. The third time, in the house, was above a table; the Blessed Virgin was immobile and silent. Jacinta cried out: “Oh, mother!... There, don’t you see Our Lady from the Cova da Iria? Look!”»

This last apparition was confirmed for the parish priest of Fatima by Olimpia Marto herself, who told Father de Marchi about it many years later.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, Lucy tells us nothing about these apparitions in her Memoirs. On the other hand, she tells us about several prophetic visions in which Jacinta was able to contemplate, as though they were a series of animated pictures, certain events announced in the great Secret of July 13, 1917.

PROPHETIC VISIONS ILLUSTRATING THE GREAT SECRET

THE VISION OF THE HOLY FATHER INSULTED AND PERSECUTED. In her Memoirs, Lucy tells us: «One day we spent our siesta down by my parents’ well. Jacinta sat on the stone slab on top of the well. Francisco and I climbed up a steep bank in search of wild honey among the brambles in a nearby thicket.

«After a little while, Jacinta called out to me: “Didn’t you see the Holy Father?” “No.” “I don’t know how it was, but *I saw the Holy Father in a very big house, kneeling by a table, with his head buried in his hands, and he was weeping. Outside the house, there were many people. Some of them*

*were throwing stones, others were cursing him and using bad language. Poor Holy Father, we must pray much for him.»*¹⁴⁴

This mysterious vision is not easy to interpret correctly. However, we know that it certainly took place after July 13, 1917, since it presupposes that the Secret was already revealed, and indeed before October 1918, when Jacinta and Francisco became sick. We also know that this vision concerns an event announced in the Secret, for Lucy continues her account, and writes:

«I have already told you how, one day, two priests recommended that we pray for the Holy Father, and explained to us who the Pope was. Afterwards, Jacinta asked me: *“Is he the one I saw weeping, the one Our Lady told us about in the Secret?”* “Yes, he is,” I answered. (And Jacinta, with childlike candour, went on:) “The Lady must surely have shown him also to those priests. You see, I wasn’t mistaken. We need to pray a lot for him.”»¹⁴⁵

This vision must be kept in mind, for it helps us to better understand the corresponding words of the Secret, announcing *«persecutions against the Church and the Holy Father»*, who *«will have much to suffer»*. Has the prophecy been fulfilled? Certain interpreters believed it applied to Pope Pius XII. But as we will explain in Volume III, it seems more probable to us that it concerns the future, just like another vision of Jacinta concerning the Holy Father...

THE VISION OF THE WAR AND THE HOLY FATHER IN PRAYER. At another time, Lucy says, «We went to the cave called Lapa do Cabeço. As soon as we got there, we prostrated on the ground, saying the prayers the Angel had taught us. After some time, Jacinta stood up and called to me: *“Can’t you see all those highways and roads full of people, who are crying with hunger and have nothing to eat? And the Holy Father in a church praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary? And so many people praying with him?”*»¹⁴⁶

Horrible visions of a frightful war, of which the events of 1939-1945 were, alas, only the first phase. We will have occasion to return to this subject. For the great war prophesied in the Secret, of which the nocturnal aurora of January 25-26, 1938, was only a sign announcing that it was at hand, was not so much the German war. It was the pitiless struggle, the unceasing war waged by the Soviet Union to extend to the whole world the hegemony of an atheistic, antireligious

and bloody communist regime.

As for the Holy Father «praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary», may we not believe that it concerns the Pope mentioned at the conclusion of the Secret: «In the end... the Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me»? Again Sister Lucy clarifies the point, for this second vision corresponds to an event prophesied in the Secret:

«Some days later, Jacinta asked me: “Can I say that I saw the Holy Father and all those people?” “No. *Don’t you see that that’s part of the Secret? If you do, they’ll find out right away!*” “All right! Then I’ll say nothing at all.”»¹⁴⁷

THE SECRET IN THE LIFE OF JACINTA. The striking images contemplated in her recent visions keep the Secret on Jacinta’s mind; the themes of the Secret made a more profound impression on her than on her two companions. Sister Lucy is insistent on this point, showing clearly how the Blessed Virgin wished to make this soul – so young and so delicate, but so sensitive and courageous – the confidante of the most intimate thoughts of Her Heart. The great and dramatic Message of Our Lady was destined for the whole world; and Our Lady willed that this innocent soul, Jacinta, be penetrated with it and live it with such love that she became, as Sister Lucy dares to say, «filled with horror»¹⁴⁸, and was led very quickly, within a few months, to the total gift and sacrifice of her life. Lucy continues:

«As I said in the notes I sent about the book called *Jacinta*, she was most deeply impressed by some of the things revealed to us in the Secret. Such was the case with the vision of hell and the ruin of the many souls who go there, or again, *the future war with all its horrors, which seemed to be always present in her mind. These made her tremble with fear.* When I saw her deep in thought, and asked her: “Jacinta, what are you thinking about?” she frequently replied: “About the war which is coming, and all the people who are going to die and go to hell! How dreadful! If they would only stop offending God, then there wouldn’t be any war, and they wouldn’t go to hell!”

«Sometimes, she also said to me: “I feel so sorry for you! Francisco and I are going to Heaven, and you’re going to stay here all by yourself! I asked Our Lady to take you to Heaven, too, but She wants you to stay here for a

while longer. When the war comes, do not be afraid. In Heaven, I'll be praying for you.»¹⁴⁹

“POOR HOLY FATHER, WE MUST PRAY MUCH FOR HIM!” When Our Lady revealed the future to Jacinta, and let her see the Holy Father persecuted, mocked, abandoned by all, and in tears, Jacinta understood how much he needed prayers. «This gave Jacinta such love for the Holy Father that, *every time she offered her sacrifices to Jesus, she added: “And for the Holy Father”*. At the end of the Rosary, she always said three Hail Marys for the Holy Father.»¹⁵⁰

It is indeed surprising to observe how much, after the apparition of July 13, the thought of the Holy Father kept constantly coming back to the minds of the three seers. This was one of their major preoccupations, along with solicitude for sinners, and the sight of the terrifying war to come. Why? Undoubtedly because the Pope plays a role of decisive importance in the great prophecy of the Secret: he is already named five times in the published part of the Secret; we may believe that he is mentioned again in the part which has not yet been published.

Let us add that several supernatural communications Sister Lucy was later favoured with, concerning the role of the Holy Father in the great prophecy of the Secret, surely supply us with the context which sheds much light on the visions of Jacinta.¹⁵¹ But we must not get ahead of ourselves...

Let us merely point out how the things Our Lady confided to her three messengers, and especially Jacinta, turned upside down their life as shepherds, which until then had been so tranquil, joyful, and carefree, From now on the great intentions of Our Lady, so grave, so dramatic, would dominate their days, even while they were at play, immensely enlarging their childish horizons, but throwing a pall over them as well... For all these revelations could not remain without fruit in their souls. Before they could be revealed to the world, the secrets of Our Lady had to engage their humble recipients more and more each day, along the sorrow-laden road of compassion and reparation.

TOWARDS PERFECT IMMOLATION

When, at the end of October, 1918, influenza struck Jacinta, and shortly after Francisco as well, for both of them it was the beginning of the sufferings which would soon lead them to the supreme sacrifice. They knew it. *Per crucem ad*

lucem. Per mortem ad vitam. Instructed by so many extraordinary graces for almost three years, they understood intuitively.

AT ARNEIRO, SUMMER, 1916. Already the Angel Precursor had begun to prepare them. «Above all, he had insistently recommended, accept and bear with submission the sufferings which the Lord will send you.»

MAY 13, AT THE COVA DA IRIA. Well after that, Our Lady had pledged them along the Way of the Cross. She had asked them their acquiescence to a real offering of themselves as victims of reparation for sins. This dialogue, from the very first encounter with Our Lady, affected their entire lives:

«“Are you willing to *offer yourselves to God*, and bear all the sufferings He will send you, in reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners?” “Yes, we are,” Lucy had answered in the name of all three. “*Then you will have much to suffer*, but the grace of God will be your comfort.”»

After this courageous, voluntary self-oblation, immolation had in fact followed. How many trials they had endured and valiantly bore since that blessed May 13! Not in vain were they given over to suffering, offered as victims of love to console the outraged holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, to convert sinners and make reparation for their crimes. Since that day, how many prayers and sacrifices Jacinta had offered at the well of Arneiro, which had become so dear to them!¹⁵² How many tears had all three shed together at the same well where the Angel had promised them that they would have so much to suffer!¹⁵³

Francisco and Jacinta, already strongly committed to the Way of the Cross, were near the final stage of the journey. It was at this point that the Blessed Virgin came to let them know this, to renew their fervour. Let us now follow Sister Lucy’s account of this apparition, which undoubtedly took place in the final days of 1918, or in January, 1919.

«*OUR LADY CAME TO SEE US*»

«Jacinta did improve somewhat, however. She was even able to get up, and could thus spend her days sitting on Francisco’s bed.

«On one occasion, she sent for me to come and see her at once. I ran right

over.

«“Our Lady came to see us”, Jacinta said. “She told us She would come to take Francisco to Heaven very soon, and *She asked me if I still wanted to convert more sinners. I said I did. She told me I would be going to a hospital where I would suffer a great deal*; and that I am to suffer for the conversion of sinners, in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for love of Jesus. I asked if you would go with me. She said you wouldn’t, and that is what I find hardest. She said my mother would take me, and then I would have to stay there all alone!”»¹⁵⁴

On another day, Jacinta was more precise; she confided to her cousin: «Our Lady wants me to go to *two hospitals*, not to be cured, but to suffer more for love of Our Lord and for sinners.»¹⁵⁵

Sister Lucy avows: «I do not know Our Lady’s exact words in these apparitions to Jacinta alone, for I never asked her what they were. I confined myself to merely listening to what she occasionally confided in me. In this account, I have tried not to repeat what I have written in the previous one, so as not to make it too long.»¹⁵⁶ How we regret – even as we admire – this supernatural discretion, which deprives us of knowing the confidences of our Heavenly Mother to Her beloved child!

Yet, we know enough for us to be moved by this predilection of Heaven, which is expressed by the gift of a cross which is heavier and more punishing to bear... But Jacinta had known for a long time that the more she suffered, the more souls she would snatch away from the eternal flames. This was a certain and absolute truth with her. Taught by the infused grace which accompanied the words of the Angel, she had understood «the value of sacrifice, how pleasing it is to God, and how, in return for it, God converts sinners.»¹⁵⁷

And with all her ardour, she gave a generous “yes” to the hardest sacrifice that could have asked of her, a sacrifice which she undoubtedly had never imagined: to suffer and die alone far from her mother, far from her father, and above all far from Lucy, her only confidante and intimate friend, whose presence gave her such comfort such great joy, the only consolation that remained for her. «I told Her yes.» Sister Lucy continues:

«After this, she was thoughtful for a while and then added: “If only you

could be with me! *The hardest part is to go without you.* Maybe the hospital is a big, dark house, where you can't see, *and I'll be there suffering all alone!* But never mind! I'll suffer for love of Our Lord, to make reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the conversion of sinners and for the Holy Father.»¹⁵⁸

It is always the same intentions, the same great themes of the Secret, which habituate and incite her to heroic sacrifice. The same transports of love always come back to her lips: often she would repeat, «Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation! I love the Immaculate Heart of Mary so much!»¹⁵⁹ «Sometimes, as she would kiss a crucifix, she would press it in her hands, saying: “O my Jesus, I love You, and I wish to suffer much for Your love!” How often did she say: “O Jesus! Now You can convert many sinners, because this is really a big sacrifice!”»¹⁶⁰

III. THE SORROWFUL PASSION: «I WILL SUFFER EVERYTHING SHE WANTS!»

AT ALJUSTREL: OCTOBER 1918 - JUNE 30, 1919

«The sick little girl suffered a great deal. Except for a few days when she was feeling better, Jacinta never left her bed since the final days of October, 1918. After the bronchial pneumonia, pleurisy caused her great suffering. She bore it, however, with a resignation and even a joy which were surprising.»¹⁶¹

Jacinta made it her business never to complain. This was both out of a delicate consideration for her mother, to keep her from getting worried, and to offer this additional sacrifice, so costly when one is suffering a great deal. From Lucy alone she felt drawn to hide nothing, to tell her about all the graces she had received, and to admit her true sufferings: «My chest hurts so much, *but I'm not saying anything to my mother.* (Jacinta confided.) I want to suffer for Our Lord, in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the Holy Father and for the conversion of sinners.»¹⁶²

“I DO NOT WANT TO UPSET HER.” .One day, when my aunt had been asking me many questions, Jacinta called me to her and said: “I don't want you to tell anybody that I'm suffering, *not even my mother; I do not want to upset her.*”

«When her mother looked sad at seeing the child so ill, Jacinta used to say: “Don’t worry, mother. I’m going to Heaven, and there I’ll be praying so much for you.”

«Or again: “Don’t cry. I’m all right.” If they asked her if she needed anything, she answered: “No, I don’t, thank you.” Then when she had left the room, she said: “I’m so thirsty, but I don’t want to take a drink. I’m offering it to Jesus for sinners.”¹⁶³

«One morning, when I went to see her, she asked me: “How many sacrifices did you offer to Our Lord last night?” “Three. I got up three times to recite the Angel’s prayers.” “Well, I offered Him many, many sacrifices. I don’t know how many there were, *but I had a lot of pain, and I made no complaint.*”»¹⁶⁴

“THIS CORD HAD THREE KNOTS AND WAS SOMEWHAT STAINED WITH BLOOD.” «A few days after falling ill, she gave me the rope she had been wearing, and said: “Keep it for me; I’m afraid my mother may see it. If I get better, I want it back again!” This cord had three knots and was somewhat stained with blood. I kept it hidden until I finally left my mother’s home. Then, not knowing what to do with it, I burned it, and Francisco’s as well.»¹⁶⁵

THE GLASS OF MILK. We must be careful not to imagine that for the saints, acts of virtue or sacrifices are always easy, or that they are accomplished without effort or pain. No, sacrifice is never natural! Jacinta experienced this to a certain extent – she who had been so lively, even capricious. She was also, occasionally, taken by surprise. In this regard, Lucy preserves for us a precious recollection:

«On another occasion, her mother brought her a cup of milk and told her to take it. “I don’t want it, mother”, she answered, pushing the cup away with her little hand. My aunt insisted a little, and then left the room, saying: “I don’t know how to make her take anything; she has no appetite.”

«As soon as we were alone, I asked her: “How can you disobey your mother like that, and not offer this sacrifice to Our Lord?” When she heard this, she shed a few tears which I had the happiness of drying, and said: “I forgot this time.”

«She called her mother, asked her forgiveness, and said she'd take whatever she wanted. Her mother brought back the cup of milk, and Jacinta drank it down without the slightest sign of reluctance. Later, she told me: "If you only knew how hard it was to drink that!"»¹⁶⁶

From then on, there was no lack of opportunities to renew this sacrifice which cost her so much. Lucy records this anecdote as well:

«Her mother knew how hard it was for her to take milk. So, one day, she brought her a fine bunch of grapes with her cup of milk, saying: "Jacinta, take this. If you can't take the milk, leave it there, and eat the grapes." "No, mother, I don't want the grapes; take them away, and give me the milk instead. I'll take that." Then, without showing the least sign of repugnance, she took it. My aunt went happily away, thinking her little girl's appetite was returning.

«She had no sooner gone than Jacinta turned to me and said: "I had such a longing for those grapes and it was so hard to drink the milk! But I wanted to offer this sacrifice to Our Lord."»¹⁶⁷

How can we not be stupefied, moved with wonder by the untiring generosity of this poor child, so sorely tried by sickness, and who taxed her imagination to devise new, voluntary sacrifices in addition to the torments she was already suffering! Lucy writes:

«One morning, I found her looking dreadful, and I asked her if she felt worse. "Last night", she answered, "I had so much pain, and I wanted to offer Our Lord *the sacrifice of not turning over in bed, therefore I didn't sleep at all.*"»¹⁶⁸

THE HARDEST SACRIFICE: LONELINESS. According to the testimony of everyone who knew her, Jacinta had a loving, sensitive and affectionate heart. She also felt a strong attachment for Lucy and her brother, an attachment which only increased during the happy days of the spring of 1916, when the Angel appeared to them at the Cabeço. The following year, the great Secret, of which they alone were the recipients, was to seal their friendship: «Tell the Secret to no one», Our Lady had concluded. «Francisco, yes, you may tell him.» Since that time, this bond forged by the Blessed Virgin Herself, by making them Her three confidants, and the subsequent supernatural friendship, had been their comfort

and help in all their trials.

For Jacinta, in the sufferings of her illness, the presence and companionship of her two close friends had become her sweetest consolation. Her loving heart realized this, and already she would at times make an effort to give up this last source of happiness, so as to offer the sacrifice. Here is Sister Lucy's account:

«Apart from school or the small tasks I was given to do, I spent every free moment with my little companions...

«Whenever I visited Jacinta's room first, she used to say: "Now go and see Francisco. *I'll make the sacrifice of staying here alone.*"

«One day when I arrived, she asked: "Did you make any sacrifices today? I've made a lot. My mother went out, and *I wanted to go and visit Francisco many times, and I didn't go.*"»¹⁶⁹

"I'LL SUFFER AS MUCH AS THEY WANT." In the first few days of April, 1919, when Francisco felt more and more seriously ill, and felt his end approaching, his little sister left him some recommendations for Heaven. Lucy was there, and she recalls and relates to us the words of her companion: «Give all my love to Our Lord and Our Lady, *and tell Them that I'll suffer as much as They want* for the conversion of sinners and in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»¹⁷⁰ While she recalled the last apparition of Our Lady, Jacinta renewed her own courageous "fiat": yes, she wished to stay on earth longer, to suffer more and thus save a greater number of sinners.

On April 4, 1919, Francisco left this world. As for Jacinta, she was riveted to her bed by illness, and could not even attend the ceremony of burial. This separation was extremely hard for her, Lucy wrote: «She suffered keenly when her brother died. She remained a long time buried in thought, and if anyone asked her what she was thinking about, she answered: "*About Francisco. I'd give anything to see him again!*" Then her eyes brimmed over with tears.»¹⁷¹

"IT IS THE HIDDEN JESUS! I LOVE HIM SO MUCH!" Jacinta suffered from another separation as well. Before her illness, while she was going to school, «at playtime she loved to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament». She liked «to be alone for a long time with the Hidden Jesus and talk to Him»; and how it bothered her to be interrupted by strangers who followed her even there, to ask

her questions!¹⁷²

Now Lucy alone was able to pay a visit to Jesus in the Tabernacle: «One day, when I stopped by on my way to school, Jacinta said to me: “Listen! Tell the Hidden Jesus that I love Him very much, that I really love Him very much indeed.” At other times, she said: “Tell Jesus that I send Him my love, and long to see Him.”»¹⁷³

Sister Lucy also mentions this charming trait which manifests better than anything else what limpid faith she had in the real, concrete Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and what ardent love she bore Him: «Sometimes, on returning from church, I went in to see her, and she asked me: “Did you receive Holy Communion?” And if I answered in the affirmative, she said: “*Come over here close to me, for you have the Hidden Jesus in your heart.*”»¹⁷⁴

Her great worry, in going to the hospital which Our Lady had foretold to her, was that she could not receive Communion there:

«On another occasion, I brought her a picture of a chalice with a host. She took it, kissed it, and radiant with joy she exclaimed: “It is the Hidden Jesus! I love Him so much! If only I could receive Him in church! Don’t they receive Holy Communion in Heaven? If they do, then I will go to Holy Communion every day. If only the Angel would go to the hospital to bring me Holy Communion again, how happy I would be!”»¹⁷⁵

Indeed, although she was now over eight years old, Father Ferreira, not listening to the recent specifications of Saint Pius X, continued to be inflexible: in the summer of 1918, he still had not granted the little seer the favour of approaching the Holy Table.¹⁷⁶

The Lord, however, is free with His gifts, and to respond to the love of a soul which desired Him with such ardour, He gave Himself to her spiritually, and gave her the grace to feel His Divine Presence:

«I don’t know how it is! But I feel Our Lord within me. I understand what He says to me, although I neither see Him nor hear Him, but it is so good to be with Him!»¹⁷⁷

Another time she said: «I so like to tell Jesus that I love Him! Many times,

when I say it to Him, *I seem to have a fire in my heart, but it doesn't burn me.*»¹⁷⁸

Again, moved by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the same ardent affections of love continually returned to her lips: «I love Our Lord and Our Lady so much, that I never get tired of telling Them that I love Them.»¹⁷⁹

AT THE HOSPITAL OF OUREM: JULY 1 - AUGUST 31, 1919

During the month of June, the doctor noticed that the disease was getting the upper hand, and it was difficult to give Jacinta all the attention she needed at the house. He advised the Marto parents to send her to St. Augustine's hospital, at Vila Nova de Ourem. The prophecy of Our Lady was about to be fulfilled... and so Jacinta departed, «knowing that she was going not to be cured, but to suffer».¹⁸⁰

«In the first few days of July, Mr. Marto took in his arms the emaciated body of his daughter, placed her as best he could upon his donkey, and conducted Jacinta to Vila Nova de Ourem. There the sick child was given intensive treatment, but with no result.»¹⁸¹

During her two month stay at the hospital, Jacinta suffered much, and more than anything else she suffered from the cruel loneliness. According to Sister Lucy:

«When her mother went to see her, she asked if she wanted anything. She told her that she wanted to see me. This was no easy matter for my aunt, but she took me with her at the first opportunity.

«As soon as Jacinta saw me, she joyfully threw her arms around me, and asked her mother to leave me with her while she went to do her shopping. Then I asked her if she was suffering a lot. "Yes, I am. But I offer everything for sinners, and in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." Then, filled with enthusiasm, she spoke of Our Lord and Our Lady: "Oh, how much I love to suffer for love of Them, just to give Them pleasure! *They greatly love those who suffer for the conversion of sinners.*"

«The time allotted for the visit passed rapidly, and my aunt arrived to take me home. She asked Jacinta if she wanted anything. The child begged her

mother to bring me with her next time she came to see her.»¹⁸²

Vila Nova de Ourem is about nine miles away from Aljustrel and it was not an easy trip. Nevertheless, Sister Lucy informs us, «my good aunt, who loved to make her little daughter happy, took me with her a second time. *I found Jacinta as joyful as ever, glad to suffer for the love of Our Good God and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for sinners and the Holy Father.* That was her ideal, and she could speak of nothing else.»¹⁸³

LAST MONTHS AT ALJUSTREL: AUGUST 31, 1919 - JANUARY 21, 1920

At the end of the month of August, since the treatment showed no result, and since the Marto family could not afford the cost of hospital treatment, it was decided that the child would come back to the house.

«Her side had an open wound, which had to be dressed every day. But in the rustic hamlet of Aljustrel, they lacked the necessary equipment for such delicate treatment. The wound became infected, and the pus flowed over the poor child's chest, as she grew weaker each day.»¹⁸⁴

“... SHE ALWAYS HAD A FEVER, HER FACE INSPIRED PITY.” Regarding the pitiful state of the seer, shortly after her return from the hospital, we have the moving testimony of Mrs. Maria da Cruz Lopes, who visited Aljustrel in September. She wrote:

«The illness was wasting away her poor body and as she was wrapped in a white woollen robe, this fragile, emaciated little figure reminded us of birds who ruffle their wings to fly to milder climates. She was alone, with a modest and recollected air. I gave her two tenths of a peseta, which she accepted.»¹⁸⁵

As for Canon Formigao, who saw her on October 13, 1919, his account is even sadder:

«Will Jacinta die? Accompanied by her mother, she arrives here. Both of them are in intense mourning over the death of Francisco... The child is like a skeleton. Her arms are frighteningly thin. Since she left the hospital of Vila Nova de Ourem, where she was treated for two months, without any

results, she always has a fever. Looking at her moves one to pity.

«Poor child! Only last year full of life and health, and now already like a wilted flower, with one foot in the grave! After an attack of tuberculosis and broncho-pneumonia, pleurisy wastes away her weakened body. Only appropriate treatment in a good sanatorium might perhaps save her. But her parents, although they are not completely indigent, nevertheless cannot afford such expenses.»¹⁸⁶

“AND WILL OUR LORD BE PLEASED?” Not content with the cruel sufferings caused by her illness, Jacinta did not wish to relax one bit her usual practices of heroic prayer and penance. Had she dispensed with them, she would have feared displeasing Jesus...

Like Lucy, Jacinta was in the habit of reciting often the prayers of the Angel, even during the night. Like the Angel, the girls would prostrate themselves on the ground, in the spirit of humility and adoration. In spite of her state of extreme weakness, Jacinta strived to remain faithful to this practice. She confided to Lucy:

«“When I’m alone, I get out of bed to recite the Angel’s prayer. *But now I’m not able to touch the ground any more with my head, because I fall over; so I only pray on my knees.*”

«One day, I had the opportunity of speaking to the Vicar (Father Faustino Jacinto Ferreira, dean of Olival). His Reverence asked me about Jacinta and how she was. I told him what I thought about her condition, and afterwards related what she had said to me about being unable to touch the ground when she prayed. His Reverence sent me to tell her that she was not to get out of bed in order to pray, but that she was to pray lying down, and then only as long as she could do so without getting tired. I delivered the message at the very first opportunity. “And will Our Lord be pleased?” she asked. “He is pleased”, I replied. “Our Lord wants us to do whatever the Reverend Vicar says.” “That’s all right, then. I won’t get up any more.”»¹⁸⁷

THE TRIAL OF INTERROGATIONS. «What distressed her most (Lucy assures us) were the frequent visits and questioning on the part of many people who wanted to see her, and whom she could no longer avoid by running off to hide.»¹⁸⁸

«Jacinta had to undergo detailed and exhausting interrogations. *She never showed the slightest impatience or repugnance*, but simply told me later: “My head aches so much after listening to all those people! Now that I cannot run away and hide, I offer more of these sacrifices to Our Lord.”»

Most of her visitors left profoundly edified by her behaviour, which was always «calm and patient, without the least complaint or importuning». Many people remarked that they felt «something supernatural»¹⁸⁹ about her. And the pious pilgrims were not the only ones to experience the inexplicable sweetness of this presence...

THE RADIANCE OF A SOUL LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. Lucy also tells us that sometimes the neighbours would come to do some sewing in her room. They would sit down, and at times remain for long hours. «They seemed happy to be there.»

«“I’ll work a little beside Jacinta,” they would say; “I don’t know what it is about her, but it is good to be with her”...

«When people asked her questions, she answered in a friendly manner, but briefly. If they said anything which she thought improper, she promptly replied: “Don’t say that; it offends the Lord Our God.”

«If they related something unbecoming about their families, she answered: “Don’t let your children commit sin, or they could go to hell.” If it concerned grown-ups, “Tell them not to do that, it is a sin, they are offending Our Lord God, and then they could be damned.”»¹⁹⁰

As we can see, the thought of hell never left her, and her obsession with the salvation of souls always remained alive.

“SHE TAUGHT THEM THE OUR FATHER AND THE HAIL MARY.” One day Jacinta confided to Lucy: «If only I could put into everybody’s heart the fire I have in my breast, which makes me burn with such love for the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary!» In her simplicity, and to the extent she could, Jacinta did strive to make these Hearts known and loved. In a charming passage, Lucy relates how Jacinta extemporaneously taught catechism to her little companions who felt such a mysterious attraction towards her, combining with their affection for her a reserve and respect which «kept them somewhat at a distance» from

her:

«When I went to visit her during her illness, I often found a large group waiting at the door, hoping to be able to come in with me and see her. They seemed to be held back by a certain sense of respect. Sometimes, before I left, I asked her: “Jacinta, do you want me to tell some of them to stay here with you and keep you company?” “Oh, yes! But just the ones who are smaller than myself.” Then they all vied with each other, saying: “I’ll stay! I’ll stay!”

«After that, she entertained them by teaching them the Our Father, the Hail Mary, how to bless themselves, and to sing. Sitting on her bed or, if she was up, on the floor of the living room, they played “pebbles”, using crab apples, chestnuts, sweet acorns, dried figs and so on, all of which my aunt was only too happy to supply, so that her little girl might enjoy the children’s company.

«She prayed the Rosary with them, and counselled them not to commit sin, and so avoid offending the Lord Our God and going to hell. Some of them spent whole mornings and afternoons with her, and seemed very happy in her company.

«But once they had left her presence, they did not dare to go back in the trusting way so natural to children. Sometimes they came in search of me, begging me to go in with them, or they waited for me outside the house, or else they waited outside the door until my aunt or Jacinta herself invited them in to see her. They seemed to like her and enjoy her company, but they felt themselves held back by a certain shyness or respect that kept them somewhat at a distance.»¹⁹¹

A TERRIBLE SECRET. Jacinta continued to live by the thought of the terrible chastisements predicted in the great Secret, prophetically revealed to her. This was undoubtedly the wish of the Most Holy Virgin, who had willed to make such a pure, sensitive and ardent soul Her own confidante. Lucy reports:

«One day, I went to Jacinta’s house to spend a little time with her. I found her sitting on her bed, deep in thought. “Jacinta, what are you thinking about?” “About the war that is coming. So many people are going to die, and almost all of them are going to hell! Many homes will be destroyed,

and many priests will be killed.”

«“Look, I am going to Heaven, and as for you, when you see the light which the Lady told us would come one night before the war, you run up there too.” “Don’t you see that nobody can just run off to Heaven!” “That’s true, you cannot! But don’t be afraid! In Heaven I’ll be praying hard for you, for the Holy Father, for Portugal, so that the war will not come here, and for all priests.”»¹⁹²

Hell, the war, the coming persecutions against priests and the Holy Father, the sacrifices which she offered to Jesus to convert sinners and make reparation for their faults – these were so many secrets which Jacinta could open up only to Lucy, whose presence therefore became more and more precious to Jacinta, and even indispensable. With her alone, she could speak about what was closest to her heart. According to Lucy:

«One day my aunt made this request: “Ask Jacinta what she is thinking, when she covers her face with her hands and remains motionless for such a long while. I’ve already asked her, but she just smiles and does not answer.”

«I put the question to Jacinta. “I think of Our Lord”, she replied, “Of Our Lady, of sinners, and of... (and she mentioned certain parts of the Secret). I love to think.”

«My aunt asked me how she answered. I just smiled. This led my aunt to tell my mother what had happened. “The life of these children is an enigma to me”, she exclaimed, “I can’t understand it!” And my mother added: “Yes, and when they are alone, they talk nineteen to the dozen. Yet however hard you listen, you can never catch a single word! I just can’t understand all this mystery.”»¹⁹³

THE FLOWERS OF THE CABEÇO. In addition to the advice and exhortations she received from Lucy, and the grave and confidential matters they discussed concerning their secrets in these last days spent at Aljustrel, Jacinta drew comfort and consolation as well from the presence of her older cousin. As good Olimpia observed, «When Lucy came in, joy and sunshine entered my house.»¹⁹⁴

In a life so hard, so full of trials as our seers experienced, it is a pleasure to find

charming incidents like the following one. In a wonderful fashion, it demonstrates their freshness of soul, their spontaneity, and also their hearts of gold. Lucy tells us:

«Whenever I could, I loved to go to the Cabeço to pray in our favourite cave. Jacinta was very fond of flowers, and coming down the hillside on the way home, I used to pick a bunch of irises and peonies, when there were any to be found, and take them to her, saying: “Look! These are from the Cabeço!”»¹⁹⁵

As Jacinta took the flowers with joy, would she recall the happy days of 1917, when in the evening she used to walk down the road to meet Lucy, who would be on her way home with the sheep? With what joy she used to greet her friend then! Beaming with happiness, she would walk before Lucy, strewing flower petals she herself had gathered.¹⁹⁶

But now, Jacinta was never ever again to see the blessed hollow of the Cabeço or the many varieties of lilies and other flowers which grew on the side of the hill!

«Sometimes, her face bathed with tears, she would say: “I will never return there again! Neither to Valinhos nor to the Cova da Iria’ That makes me so sad!” “But what does it matter, if you go to Heaven to see Our Lord and Our Lady?” “That’s true”, she answered. Then she would be content in her thoughts, as she would pick the flowers from her bouquet, and count the petals of each one.»¹⁹⁷

For them also, their days were numbered, and the hour of the final and most painful sacrifice approached...

IV. THE SUPREME SACRIFICE: «I WILL DIE ALL ALONE!»

A NEW APPARITION OF OUR LADY

As a compassionate mother, Our Lady Herself wished to prepare Her child for the final act of self-renunciation. In December, 1919, She came to announce to her that the hour had come... Lucy writes:

«Once again, the Blessed Virgin deigned to visit Jacinta, to tell her of new crosses and sacrifices awaiting her.

«She gave me the news saying: ***“She told me that I am going to Lisbon to another hospital; that I will not see you again, nor my parents either, and after suffering a great deal, I shall die alone. But She said I must not be afraid, since She Herself is coming to take me to Heaven.”***»

«She hugged me and wept: “I will never see you again! You won’t be coming to visit me there. Oh please, pray hard for me, because I am going to die alone!”»¹⁹⁸

“I WILL DIE ALL ALONE!” Poor child! From then on, this terrible prophecy was to obsess her, to the point of making her feel a veritable agony. Sister Lucy gives us a poignant account of the anguish which then came over her:

«Jacinta suffered terribly right up to the day of her departure for Lisbon. She kept clinging to me and sobbing: “I’ll never see you again! Nor my mother, nor my brothers, nor my father! I’ll never see anybody ever again! And then, I’ll die all alone!”»¹⁹⁹

If at least she could be sure that she would be able to receive Holy Communion! But no, not yet being admitted to the Holy Table, Jacinta feared being deprived of It. «Will I die alone without receiving the Hidden Jesus? Oh, if only Our Lady would bring Him to me when She comes to take me!» she exclaimed. «To die alone» – nothing frightened her more. She reminds us of Saint Joan of Arc, who more than anything else feared dying by fire! But like Saint Joan, Jacinta was ready to suffer everything. One day, Lucy tried to distract her: “Don’t think about it”, I advised her one day. “Let me think about it”, she replied, “for the more I think, the more I suffer, and I want to suffer for love of Our Lord and for sinners.”»²⁰⁰ Then, to regain her courage, she would recall the promise of Our Lady: soon, she would be in Heaven!

“OUR LADY WILL COME TO FIND ME, TO TAKE ME TO HEAVEN.”
Lucy, who was well acquainted with the secrets of her heart, was able to find the words which consoled her the most:

«Shortly before she went to Lisbon, at one of those times when she felt sad at the thought of our coming separation, I said to her: “Don’t be upset because I can’t go with you. You can then spend all your time thinking of Our Lady and Our Lord, and saying many times over those words you love so much: *My God, I love You! Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sweet Heart of*

Mary, etc.” “Yes, indeed”, she eagerly replied, “I’ll never get tired of saying those until I die! And then, I can sing them many times over in Heaven!”»²⁰¹

To keep from getting too frightened over the approaching separation, Jacinta kept repeating: «But it doesn’t matter; Our Lady will come to find me to take me to Heaven.»

«One day (Lucy reports) I asked her: “What are you going to do in Heaven?” “I’m going to love Jesus very much, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, too. I’m going to pray a lot for you, for sinners, for the Holy Father, for my parents and my brothers and sisters, and for all the people who have asked me to pray for them ...”

«When her mother looked sad at seeing the child so ill, Jacinta used to say; “Don’t worry mother. I’m going to Heaven, and there I’ll be praying so much for you!”»²⁰²

Like Saint Therese, Jacinta had resolved to «spend her Heaven doing good on earth.»

TOWARDS HEAVEN... BUT IN FAITH. «I’m going to Heaven», she would say resolutely to console her mother or comfort herself. Yet we know that it was much more an act of faith than the expression of a sweet hope, felt from within. No, for the time being, just as Jesus was in His agony, she found herself plunged into darkness. Lucy relates:

«On one occasion, I found her clasping a picture of Our Lady to her heart, and saying, “*O my dearest Heavenly Mother, do I have to die all alone?*” The poor child seemed so frightened at the thought of dying alone!

«I tried to comfort her, saying: “What does it matter if you die alone, so long as Our Lady is coming to fetch you?” “It’s true, it doesn’t matter, really. I don’t know why it is, *but I sometimes forget Our Lady is coming to take me. I only remember that I’ll die without having you near me.*”»²⁰³

As young as Jacinta was, Our Lady wanted her also to pass through this terrible night which the Saints went through, to follow more closely their Spouse in agony. It was when her soul was deprived of all consolation, frightened at the

thought of the sufferings at hand, that there sprung from her soul the purest, the most heroic, and the most meritorious affections of love. Lucy recalls:

«At times, she kissed and embraced a crucifix, exclaiming: “*O my Jesus! I love You, and I want to suffer very much for love of You!*”

«How often did she say: “*O Jesus! Now you can convert many sinners, because this is really a big sacrifice!*”»²⁰⁴

THE UNEXPECTED INTERVENTION OF DOCTOR LISBOA

The Marto parents, having seen that the treatment at the hospital of Vila Nova de Ourem was in vain, judged that it was useless to send their daughter to another hospital.

And yet, suddenly, in a completely unexpected manner, the prophecy of Our Lady was fulfilled to the letter. In mid-January of the year 1920, a renowned doctor of Lisbon, Dr. Lisboa,²⁰⁵ decided to visit Fatima with his spouse. As he passed through, he desired to pay a visit to Father Formigao, then a professor at the seminary of Santarem. The latter decided to accompany them to Aljustrel.²⁰⁶

The doctor himself described this visit:

«After a visit to the Cova with Lucy, in whose company we prayed the Rosary with unforgettable faith and devotion, we returned to Fatima, where we spoke to Jacinta and the mothers of the two seers...

«Little Jacinta was very pale and thin, and walked with great difficulty... When I censured them for their lack of effort to save their daughter, they told me that it was not worth while, because Our Lady wished to take her, and that she had been interned for two months in the local hospital without any improvement in her condition. I replied that Our Lady’s will was certainly more powerful than any human efforts and that in order to be certain that She really wished to take Jacinta, they must not neglect any of the normal aids of science to save her life.

«Impressed by my words, they went to ask the advice of Father Formigao, who supported my opinion in every respect. It was therefore arranged on the spot that Jacinta should be sent to Lisbon and treated by the best doctors

in one of the hospitals of the capital.»²⁰⁷

HER LAST VISIT TO THE COVA DA IRIA

Certain that she was leaving Fatima forever, Jacinta asked her mother to take her one last time to the Cova da Iria. Like her poor child, the mother was extremely weakened, a real “abyss of misery”, as Ti Marto said. She did not have the strength to take Jacinta on foot, so Jacinta went on a donkey. Olimpia herself recalled to Father de Marchi this last pilgrimage of the little seer to the place of the apparitions:

«When we arrived at the Carreira pool, Jacinta got off the donkey and began to say the Rosary alone. She picked a few flowers for the chapel.

«When we arrived we knelt down and prayed a little in her own way. “Mother”, she said when she got up, “when Our Lady went away She passed over those trees, and afterwards She went into Heaven so quickly that I thought She would get Her feet caught!”»²⁰⁸

A HEARTRENDING GOODBYE: JANUARY 21, 1920

«The day came at last when she was to leave for Lisbon. It was a heartrending farewell. For a long time, she clung to me with her arms around my neck, and sobbed: “We shall never see each other again! Pray a lot for me, until I go to Heaven. Then I will pray a lot for you...”

«“Never tell the Secret to anyone, even if they kill you. Love Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary very much, and make many sacrifices for sinners!”...»²⁰⁹

Then it was time to leave. Antonio, the eldest of the family, accompanied them. Olimpia had this to recall:

«During the journey (by train) Jacinta stood nearly all the time by the window looking through the glass. In Santarem, a woman came to the train and gave her some candy, but Jacinta wouldn’t eat anything.

«We knew nobody in Lisbon and it was for this reason that Baron

Alvaiazere and my husband had arranged for some ladies to meet us. They were to recognize us by the white handkerchiefs tied to our arms. Jacinta, whom I was carrying in my arms, had a handkerchief in her left hand.»²¹⁰

What an adventure! Good Olimpia had never taken a train before, and of course she knew nothing of Lisbon. On their arrival, they saw the three ladies who had come to meet them, just as arranged. But now came the first disappointment: the person who had promised to let the seer stay with her before going to the hospital, no doubt because of Jacinta's miserable state, finally refused. The little girl was exhausted, pus was flowing from the wound in her side, and it gave a nauseous odour. To agree to take care of her was a rough task and a grave responsibility.

Off they went, therefore, in search of other lodgings:

«We went to various houses but nobody would take us in. When we were nearly tired out from walking, we came to the house of a good woman who opened her doors to us and could not have given us a better welcome. I stayed there with Jacinta for over a week and then went back to Fatima.»²¹¹

JACINTA STAYS WITH MOTHER GODINHO: JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 2, 1920

Jacinta was finally accepted in an orphanage called "Our Lady of Miracles", located at 17 Rua de Estrela. It was named after a chapel next door, consecrated under this title. The foundress and directress, Maria of the Purification Godinho, was a former Claretian postulant of Lisbon.²¹² Gathered around her were some young women who were living as religious since 1913, although without the habit and official recognition.

Mother Godinho was a good, pious woman, without learning. Later on she said: «I saw what an angelic creature the Blessed Virgin had sent me. For a long time I had desired to see the privileged children to whom Our Lady had appeared. I was far from imagining that one day my poor abode would house Jacinta, the youngest of the three.»²¹³ Thus, Mother Godinho was full of esteem for her little visionary, and also very proud of the honour which had been granted her.

FINALLY, TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE COMMUNION AND CONFESS! In

the religious atmosphere of the house, Jacinta quickly found herself at ease, notwithstanding her great timidity. And then – an unexpected favour – finally she could attend Mass and receive communion almost every day! Indeed Mother Godinho herself had to take the happy initiative of seeing to the communion of the little seer, who had been preparing for it for so long, and with such ardour! Olimpia recalled that:

«She was carried in my arms, or in the arms of the Superior, when she went to the altar of the chapel and the Communion Table.

«I remember how one day, before returning to the orphanage, she said to me: “Mother, I want to go to confession.” And so we went, although dawn had not yet broken, to the church at Estrela... My Jesus! What a great church!... When we came out, the child was very consoled and kept repeating: “Oh, mother! What a good Father! What a good Father!... He asked me so many things!”... I would sure like to know what the priest asked her! But the things of confession are not to be spoken about.”²¹⁴

THE TESTIMONY OF MOTHER GODINHO. At this stage in our account, we must open a brief critical parenthesis. On many, many occasions Mother Godinho spoke of the actions and gestures of little Jacinta. Very often, unfortunately, she was the only witness of these things. The prolixity and bewildering character of several of the statements she attributes to the seer have justly evoked some scepticism on the part of well informed critics. Father Alonso declared in 1971: «Mother Godinho attributed so many things to Jacinta that it is impossible that the child could really have said all that!»²¹⁵

However, while he does point out that the declarations of Mother Godinho are not always perfectly credible, the Fatima expert remarks that it would be unjustified to reject indiscriminately her testimony as a whole. Many actions and gestures which she attributes to Jacinta seem taken from real life and correspond quite well to her character, such as Lucy has described it for us.²¹⁶

That being said, let us resume our account.

“SHE SPOKE WITH SUCH AUTHORITY!”... In the orphanage, Mother Godinho recalled, there were twenty or twenty-five children:

«Jacinta was friendly with them all but she preferred the company of a little

girl about her own age to whom she would give little sermons. It was delightful to hear them, and, hidden behind the half-open door, I witnessed many of these conversations. “You mustn’t lie or be lazy or disobedient, and you must bear everything with patience for love of Our Lord if you want to go to Heaven.” She spoke with such authority! It wasn’t at all like a child!...»²¹⁷

“OUR LADY DOES NOT WANT PEOPLE TO TALK IN CHURCH!” «In the house (Mother Godinho reports) there was a room which overlooked the chapel. She would go there, and from that spot she could see the Tabernacle, without anybody noticing her prayer. Her attitude of recollection and fervour, especially her eyes, fixed with love upon the Tabernacle, were very impressive.»²¹⁸

From that location, however, Jacinta could see what was going on in the nave of the chapel. «She remarked that several people did not have the necessary attitude of recollection, and she said to me: “Godmother – (this was how the children addressed the directress) – these people should not be allowed to behave this way before the Blessed Sacrament. In church, we must be tranquil and not talk... Our Lady does not want people to talk in church!”»²¹⁹

NEW VISITS OF OUR LADY. Let Mother Godinho be heard once more: «During the time she was in my house she must have received a visit from Our Lady more than once. I remember on one occasion she said: “*Please move, dear godmother, I am waiting for Our Lady!*”, and her face took on a radiant expression.»²²⁰

What words were exchanged then between the Blessed Virgin and her confidante? We are almost completely ignorant. Let us however note the only indication Lucy gives us in the Memoirs: «From Lisbon, she sent word that Our Lady had come to see her there; *She had told her the day and hour of her death. Finally Jacinta reminded me to be very good.*»²²¹

TRANSFER TO THE HOSPITAL: FEBRUARY 2, 1920

During this time, Doctor Lisboa looked into getting the child into a hospital. However, he encountered an unforeseen obstacle: good Olimpia, no doubt

moved to pity by the lamentable state of her daughter, was obstinately opposed to an operation. Here is Ti Marto's account:

«I was not at Lisbon to take care of Jacinta with her illness. I was not needed there, but I was needed here. Everything I did for the child, I did by means of the Baron, who was so good to me.»²²²

«In the beginning of one week, he asked me to come and see him: Canon Formigao, he said, has received a letter from Lisbon. There are difficulties over there. Olimpia wants to know nothing about it. They wrote to see if there was not some way to stop her opposing what they wanted to do. The letter said these country people are so stupid that they don't even want a good deed done for them.

«We both started laughing, and I told him: "Oh, Baron, that really is true! As for myself, Baron, I am of the opinion that we must do everything these good people wish for my little Jacinta."

«So I wrote to my wife: "I believe it's not necessary that you remain there. You can do so, on the condition that you neither embarrass nor torment these good people who wish to do us some good."»²²³

Olimpia, therefore, had to silence her maternal apprehensions and give in. On February 2, 1920, Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus, Jacinta left "Our Lady of Miracles" for the hospital of Dona Estefania, where she occupied bed no. 38 in the children's ward. For Jacinta it was a new and sorrowful separation. Besides, didn't she know that the operation would do no good? «It's all useless (she kept repeating); Our Lady came to tell me I would die soon.»²²⁴ No matter, she had to consent to this new sacrifice: at the hospital, she would no longer have the presence of the Hidden Jesus, and the comfort of receiving Him every day into her soul.

And then her loneliness increased, because at this time at Aljustrel, other children of the family were sick, and they needed the attention of their mother. Called back by her husband and seeing that the surgery was delayed, Ti Olimpia decided to return to Fatima. On February 5, she left her poor child for good.²²⁵

Granted, every day Mother Godinho and some women friends came to visit her, but for a child barely ten years old, nothing could replace her mother's presence.

And thus the prophecy of Our Lady was fulfilled: Jacinta found herself all alone in a great hospital, to die there.

“PATIENCE! WE MUST SUFFER IF WE WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN!”
«Purulent pleurisy, and osteitis of the seventh and eighth left ribs.» Such was the diagnosis of Jacinta by Doctor Castro Freire, who welcomed her to the hospital.

«On February 10th, Jacinta’s operation took place at his hands. She suffered greatly, for they could not give her chloroform because of her extreme weakness, and they had to make do with a local anaesthetic, which was applied very imperfectly in those times. Nevertheless, she suffered even more from the humiliation of seeing all her clothes removed. Mother Godinho, who remained with her until the time of the operation, tells us that the little one cried a great deal at seeing herself in the hands of the doctors like this.

«The result of the operation, carried out by Dr. Castro Freire, assisted by Dr. Elvas, at first appeared encouraging. Two ribs were extracted from her left side, leaving a wound as wide as a hand. This caused her great suffering, and the pain was revived every time the wound had to be dressed. However, her only cry was: “Aie! Aie!... Oh! Our Lady!” She would add: “Patience! We must all suffer to get to Heaven!”»²²⁶

At some date we do not know, Mr Marto came to visit his “Jacintinha”. But he could not, alas, remain very long with her. At Aljustrel, his family needed him and he too had to resign himself to leaving her to her solitude and sufferings. However, as a good mother, the Blessed Virgin took pity on Her child and came soon to lighten her trial...

“SHE HAS TAKEN ALL MY SUFFERINGS AWAY.” Three days before dying, Jacinta declared to Mother Godinho: «Listen, godmother, I’m no longer in pain! (The night before she had confided that she was suffering great pains.) Our Lady appeared to me again. She told me that She would come to take me soon and that I wouldn’t suffer any more.»²²⁷ And in fact, from that day she did not show any more signs of suffering. Dr. Lisboa wrote in his report:

«As a matter of fact, right after this apparition in the middle of the hospital room, all her sufferings disappeared, and she was able to distract herself by looking at pious images, one of which was Our Lady of Sameiro, which

was later offered to me as a souvenir of Jacinta. The child said that this image reminded her the most of the Virgin such as She appeared to her.»²²⁸

From now on, the place where Our Lady appeared again, at the foot of her bed, became a sacred spot for her. When Mother Godinho sat there, the seer would exclaim: «Not there, godmother, that's where Our Lady was!»²²⁹ One of the nurses purposely stood there, just to see her reaction. Jacinta didn't dare to say anything, "but her face took on such an expression of pain that I felt I could not remain there", the nurse told Father de Marchi.²³⁰

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20: SHE DIES ALL ALONE

A few days after the operation, Dr. Lisboa, full of hope for his patient's chances, wrote to Mr. Marto and the Baron of Alvaiazère, telling them that everything had gone well.

Jacinta, however, knew the day and hour of her death.²³¹ Here is Dr. Lisboa's report:

«On the evening of that 20th of February, at about six o'clock, Jacinta said that she felt worse and wished to receive the sacraments.

«The parish priest, Dr. Pereira dos Reis, was called and he heard her confession about eight o'clock that night. I was told that Jacinta had insisted that the Blessed Sacrament be brought to her as Viaticum but that Father Reis had not concurred because she seemed fairly well. He promised to bring her Holy Communion in the morning. *Jacinta again asked for Viaticum, saying that she would die shortly.*

«And indeed, around half past ten that night, she died peacefully, but without having received Holy Communion.»²³²

Everything was accomplished. The prophecy of Our Lady had been fulfilled: Jacinta died alone, without parents or friends, and without anyone to attend her in her last moments.²³³ She was even deprived of the supreme comfort: the sweet Presence of Jesus in the Host, which she had so long desired for that supreme moment – and it had been refused her. What a sacrifice! Once again she could repeat: «O Jesus, now You can convert many sinners, because I suffer a

great deal!»

The two long and lonely hours which elapsed between her confession and her death – what were they like? This is a secret of her soul, a soul thirsting for the salvation of sinners, and of her heart, a heart burning with love for Jesus and Mary... But we can be certain of one thing: Our Lady surely kept Her promise; She Herself came to fetch Her child, to introduce her, finally, into the infinite beatitude of Heaven!

«I WILL RETURN TO FATIMA... BUT AFTER MY DEATH»

Here is Dr. Eurico Lisboa's account of the events which followed the death of the little seer:

«When I was told what had occurred during the night I spoke to Dona Amelia Castro, who came every day to my consulting room for treatment to her eyes, and she obtained from certain members of her family a white First Communion dress used by poor children, and money to buy a blue silk sash. Jacinta was thus laid out in Our Lady's colours according to her wish.

«As soon as her death became known, various people sent money for the expenses of the funeral which was fixed for the following day, Sunday, at noon, the body to be taken to one of the cemeteries of Lisbon.

«When the coffin left the hospital mortuary, it occurred to me that it might be wiser to have the body deposited in some special place, in case the apparitions should later be confirmed by the ecclesiastical Authorities or the general incredulity on the subject be overcome. I therefore proposed that the coffin containing Jacinta's body be deposited in the church of the Holy Angels until its removal to some vault could be arranged.

«I then went to see my good friend, Father Reis, the parish priest who, however, balked at the idea of the body remaining in his church owing to certain difficulties. However, with the help of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, some of whose members happened to be in the sacristy at the time, Father Reis was persuaded to give his permission to let the body remain there. Soon afterwards it arrived and was placed humbly on two stools in a corner of the sacristy.

«The news spread rapidly and soon a sort of pilgrimage of believers in Fatima began, the faithful bringing their Rosaries and statues to touch Jacinta's dress and pray by her side. All this profoundly disturbed Father Reis who was averse to his church being used for what might well be a false devotion, and he protested energetically by both word and action, thereby surprising those who knew him as a most kind and courteous priest.

«It had finally been decided that the body should be taken to a vault in Vila Nova de Ourem, and matters were accordingly arranged. This however involved a delay of two days, the funeral being fixed for Tuesday at four o'clock from the Holy Angels Church to the Rossio station, and from thence by train to Vila Nova de Ourem.

«Meanwhile the body remained in the open coffin, which again caused serious anxiety to Father Reis, who feared an intervention on the part of the sanitary authorities, and he continued to be worried by the stream of visitors, which he only avoided by locking the coffin in an office.

«At last Father Reis, in order to avoid the responsibility of the open coffin and the pilgrims, deposited the body in the confraternity room above the sacristy and handed the key to the firm of undertakers, Antonio Almeida and Co., who had been hired for the funeral. Mr. Almeida remembers to this day, and in great detail, what took place on that occasion.

«In order to satisfy the innumerable requests to visit the body, he remained in the church all day on February 23, accompanying each group of pilgrims – whose numbers were strictly limited – to the room above, in order to avoid any unseemliness which might occur.

«He was deeply impressed by the respect and devotion with which the people approached and kissed the little corpse on the face and the hands.»²³⁴

“A PLEASANT PERFUME.” Here let the witness himself, Mr. Almeida speak. He writes:

«I feel as though I can still see this little angel. Lying in her casket, she seemed to be alive, with her lips and cheeks a beautiful rosy colour. I have seen many dead people, young and old, but I have never seen anything like

her... The most obstinate unbeliever would not have been able to doubt. Think of the odour corpses often give off, which cannot be borne without repugnance! Yet the little girl was dead for three and a half days, and the odour she exhaled was like a bouquet of various flowers...»²³⁵

Doctor Lisboa continues:

«On Tuesday, February 24, at eleven o'clock in the morning, the body was placed in a leaden coffin, which was soldered. Apart from the solderer, present were Mr. Almeida, the parish authorities and some ladies including Dona Maria de Jesus de Oriol Pena, who declared to several persons who can still witness to it today, that the perfume exhaled by the body at the moment the coffin was closed was very pleasant, like that of sweet-smelling flowers, a very singular fact given the purulent character of the illness and the prolonged time the body had remained in the open air. The funeral service took place the afternoon of the same day. The body was accompanied by a large crowd on foot (up to the train station), in the rain. The casket was deposited in the family vault of the Baron of Alvaiazere, at Vila Nova de Ourem.»²³⁶

Two weeks later, on September 12, 1935, Bishop da Silva ordered the transfer of Jacinta's body to the cemetery of Fatima. When the coffin was opened, all the assistants were astonished to observe that the face of the seer had remained perfectly intact. Again, on May 1, 1951, on the occasion of the final inhumation in the basilica, it could be observed that Jacinta's face was still perfectly recognizable.

In expressing our wish that the Church soon grant her the glory of canonization,²³⁷ we can already make our own the beautiful prayer which Sister Lucy addresses to her at the beginning of her Memoirs:

«Swift through the world
You went a-flying,
Dearest Jacinta,
In deepest suffering
Jesus loving.
Forget not my plea
And prayer to you:
Be ever my friend

Before the throne
Of the Virgin Mary!
O lily of candour,
Shining pearl,
Up there in Heaven
You live in glory,
O seraphim of love,
With your little brother,
At the Master's Feet
Pray for me.»²³⁸

APPENDIX I - TESTIMONY ON THE SANCTITY OF JACINTA

THE TESTIMONY OF SISTER LUCY

«What did people feel when they were around Jacinta?» Canon Galamba asked Sister Lucy. In her Fourth Memoir, Sister Lucy answers this at length, and with great psychological finesse.

“A HOLY PERSON WHO SEEMS TO BE IN CONTINUAL COMMUNICATION WITH GOD.” «What I myself usually felt was much the same as anyone feels in the presence of a holy person who seems to be in continual communication with God. Jacinta's demeanour was always serious and reserved, but friendly. All her actions seemed to reflect the presence of God in a way proper to people of mature age and great virtue. I never noticed in her that excessive frivolity of childish enthusiasm for games and pretty things, so typical of small children. This, of course, was after the apparitions; before then, she was the personification of enthusiasm and caprice! I cannot say that the other children gathered around her as they did around me. This was probably due to the fact that she did not know as many songs or stories with which to teach and amuse them, or perhaps that there was in her a seriousness far beyond her years.

«If in her presence a child, or even a grown-up, were to say or do anything unseemly, she would reprimand them, saying: “Don't do that, for you are offending the Lord Our God, and He is already so much offended!”

«If, as sometimes happened, the child or adult answered back, and called her a

“pious Mary” or a plaster saint, or some other such thing, she would look at them very seriously and walk away without a single word. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why she did not enjoy more popularity.»²³⁹

«*THIS MUST BE AN ANGEL!*»

«One Sunday, my friends from Moita – Maria, Rosa, and Ana Caetano, and Maria and Ana Brogueira – came after Mass to ask my mother to let me go and spend the day with them. Once I received permission, they asked me to bring Jacinta and Francisco along too. I asked my aunt and she agreed, and so all three of us went to Moita. After dinner, Jacinta was so sleepy that her little head began to nod. Mr. José Alves sent one of his nieces to go and put her to bed. In just a short while, she fell fast asleep.

«The people of the little hamlet began to gather in order to spend the afternoon with us. They were so anxious to see Jacinta that they peeped in to see if she were awake. They were filled with wonder when they saw that, although in a deep sleep, *she had a smile on her lips, the look of an angel, and her little hands joined and raised towards Heaven.*

«The room was soon filled with curious people. Everyone wanted to see her, but those inside were in no hurry to come out and make room for the others. Mr. Alves, his wife and his nieces all said: “*This must be an angel.*” Overcome, as it were, with awe, they remained kneeling beside the bed until, about half-past four, I went to call her, so that we could pray the Rosary in the Cova da Iria and then return home.»²⁴⁰

THE PRAYERS OF A SAINT

AT THE CHURCH OF FATIMA. When Jacinta was going to school, after October 1917, «at playtime she loved to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. “They seem to guess”, she complained. “We are no sooner inside the church than a crowd of people come asking us questions! *I wanted so much to be alone for a long time with the Hidden Jesus and talk to Him, but they would never let us!*”

«It was true, the simple country folk never left us alone. With the utmost simplicity, they told us about all their needs and their troubles. Jacinta showed

the greatest compassion, especially when it concerned some sinner, saying: “We must pray and offer sacrifices to Our Lord, so that he will be converted and not go to hell, poor man!”»²⁴¹

THREE HAIL MARYS TO OBTAIN A HEALING. «Again, a poor woman afflicted with a terrible disease met us one day. Weeping, she knelt before Jacinta and begged her to ask Our Lady to cure her. Jacinta was distressed to see a woman kneeling before her, and caught hold of her with trembling hands to lift her up. But seeing this was beyond her strength, she too knelt down and said three Hail Marys with the woman. She then asked her to get up, and then assured her that Our Lady would cure her. After that, she continued to pray daily for that woman, until she returned some time later, to thank Our Lady for her cure.»²⁴²

“SHE NEVER FORGOT HER SOLDIER.” «On another occasion, there was a soldier who wept like a child. He had been ordered to leave for the front, although his wife was sick in bed and he had three small children. He pleaded that either his wife would be cured or that the order would be revoked. Jacinta invited him to say the Rosary with her, and then said to him: “Don’t cry. Our Lady is so good!... She will certainly grant you the grace you are asking.”

«From then on, she never forgot her soldier. At the end of the Rosary, she always said one Hail Mary for him. Some months later, he appeared with his wife and his three small children, to thank Our Lady for the two graces he had received. Having come down with fever on the eve of his departure, he had been released from military service, and as for his wife, he said she had been miraculously cured by Our Lady.»²⁴³

A CASE OF BILOCATION? On another occasion Sister Lucy records this astounding episode: «An aunt of mine called Victoria was married and lived in Fatima. She had a son who was a real prodigal. I do not know the reason, but he left his father’s house, and no one knew what had become of him. In her distress, my aunt came to Aljustrel one day, to ask me to pray to Our Lady for this son of hers. Not finding me, she asked Jacinta instead, who promised to pray for him. A few days later, he suddenly returned home, asked his parents’ forgiveness, and then went to Aljustrel to relate his sorry story.

«He told us that, after having spent all that he had stolen from his parents, he wandered about for quite a while like a tramp until, for some reason I have now forgotten, he was put in jail at Torres Novas. After he had been there for some

time, he succeeded in escaping one night and fled to the remote hills and unfamiliar pine groves. Realizing he had completely lost his way, and torn between the fear of being captured and the darkness of a stormy night, he found that his only recourse was prayer. Falling on his knees, he began to pray. Some minutes had passed, he affirmed, when Jacinta appeared to him, took him by the hand and led him to the main road which runs from Alqueidao to Reguengo, making a sign for him to continue in that direction. When morning dawned, he found himself on the road to Boleiros. Recognizing the place where he was, he was overcome with emotion and directed his steps straight home to his parents.

«Now what he declared, was that Jacinta had appeared to him, and that he had recognized her perfectly. I asked Jacinta if it was true that she had gone there to guide him. She answered that she had not, that she had no idea at all of the location of the pine woods and hills where he had been lost. “I only prayed and pleaded very much with Our Lady for him, because I felt so sorry for Aunt Victoria.” That was how she answered me. How, then, did it happen? I don’t know. Only God knows.»²⁴⁴

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SURGEON: «A VERY COURAGEOUS CHILD.»

Here is the testimony of Dr. Castro Freire, who operated on Jacinta at the hospital of Dona Estefania at Lisbon:

«“I was already a specialist in paediatrics and professor when I met Jacinta at the hospital of Dona Estefania, where I was practicing. She arrived at the hospital in very serious condition, with a face very marked by suffering; her purulent pleurisy was followed by pneumonia. She had two decayed ribs, at least the left one, I believe. It seems to me that she also had a problem with one of the bones of her forearm, but I am not very sure... The operation consists in opening a fissure large enough for the drainage of pus and to dry the rib areas.”

«When asked the question: “In your opinion, Doctor, under those circumstances would such an operation be painful?” he answered: “Very painful, for several reasons. Jacinta had already suffered a great deal from the illness itself before coming to the hospital, and even at the hospital when she was waiting to be operated on; there was no general anaesthesia; and a local anaesthetic is much more painful when there is inflammation of the tissues. There is also the fact that it was a long operation... Jacinta impressed me as a very courageous child,

because when a cavity is opened, a local anaesthetic is far from suppressing all pain... The only words I heard her pronounce during the operation were these: *Aie! Jesus! Aie! My God!* After the operation I continued to follow her progress for a certain time; I checked the state of her dressings; it was very painful to change them... At a given moment, shortly before her death, she was transferred to another service.”

«When asked: “Can Jacinta’s patience be considered heroic?” the doctor answered: “Certainly, especially if we consider everything she suffered, the manner in which she suffered, and the fact that she was only a child, for as we know, an adult has more capacity for suffering than a child.”

«To the question, “Would you be happy, doctor, if Jacinta were declared Blessed and a Saint of the Church?” he answered: “That would be a great joy for me, considering the heroism demonstrated by this child.”»²⁴⁵

APPENDIX II - A MESSAGE OF OUR LADY FOR CANON FORMIGAO

Among all the statements, prophecies and secrets attributed by Mother Godinho to our little seer during her brief stay at Lisbon, the message addressed to Canon Formigao merits special consideration, because of its solid guarantees of authenticity.

We know that during her last days, Jacinta insistently requested several times that the Reverend Doctor Manuel Formigao be called to her side, affirming that Our Lady had appeared to her and had given her a message to transmit to him. A letter of Mother Godinho written February 19, 1920, the day before Jacinta’s death, gives clear testimony regarding this insistent request of the little seer. Unfortunately, the revered priest, to whom Jacinta had also desired to go to confession, could not be freed from his occupations in time, and when he arrived at Lisbon, the seer had already been dead for several days. Shortly before dying, however, she had communicated to Mother Godinho the message of Our Lady, so that Canon Formigao could be informed anyway.

Mother Godinho spoke with the priest face to face, and told him what Jacinta had said. Just as during the interrogations, Canon Formigao took notes on the spot, and reviewed them a few days later. Here is the essence of the text, written

at the end of February, 1920:

«The revelation which, according to Jacinta de Jesus Marto, the Most Holy Virgin made to her when she was at Lisbon, shortly before her death and which, since I could not receive personally, as she so strongly desired, her “godmother”, Maria of the Purification Godinho – a lady whom I am assured is worthy of belief – transmitted to me for her part and by order of Our Lady (...). What is written below is so to speak the free translation, but still the most exact rendering, of the communication of the seer:

«Our Lord is very angry over the sins and crimes which are committed in Portugal. For this reason a terrible cataclysm of the social order menaces our country, especially the city of Lisbon. It seems that a civil war of an anarchist or communist character will break out, accompanied by plundering, killing, arson, and all sorts of devastation. The capital will become a real image of hell. At the moment when the Divine Justice, so offended, inflicts such a frightful chastisement, let all those who can flee from this city. This chastisement here predicted, must be made known little by little, with proper discretion.»²⁴⁶

It is a terrible prophecy. Everything in it however is clear and easily understood. The danger evoked here was fulfilled to the letter in Madrid, in 1936²⁴⁷. We ourselves have every reason to believe, as later revelations of Sister Lucy imply, that Portugal also might have undergone a civil war, along with the Bolshevik terror. But the prophecy was conditional, and, in perfect harmony with the rest of the message, the Blessed Virgin at the same time offers us the means to prevent the chastisement: as we will see later on, it turns out to be the consecration of Portugal to Her Immaculate Heart, but also – indeed first of all – reparation, for these two requests always go together at Fatima.

As Jacinta indeed explained the words of the Blessed Virgin, «if there were souls who would do penance and make reparation for the offences done to God, and works of reparation were instituted to make satisfaction for crimes, the chastisement would be prevented...»²⁴⁸

AN EFFICACIOUS WARNING. These words, which harmonize so well with the revelations received by Sister Lucy, were to have a great effect with an elite group of chosen souls: from these words they drew the inspiration for a life completely devoted to reparation, to satisfy the requests of Our Lady. At Fatima, and nowhere else, we have five congregations of women whose spirituality is

directly oriented in this sense: among others, the “Missionary Sisters of Reparation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus”, the “Servants of Mary of Reparation”, the “Claretian Sisters of Reparation”, and the “Missionaries of Reparation of the Holy Face”.²⁴⁹

But the message of Our Lady was addressed by name to Canon Formigao, and he was the first to recognize a call from Heaven to found a work corresponding to this request. In 1934, he wrote that this thought of the need for reparation seemed to him the most profound reason for the marvellous events which took place at the Cova da Iria: «Individual faults and collective iniquities cried to Heaven for vengeance, and the Most Holy Virgin had difficulty holding back the arms of Her Blessed Son, ready to unloose the blows of Divine Justice on those who openly and fearlessly defied the wrath of the Most High...

«It was then that a handful of chosen souls offered themselves generously to the Lord... May it please God not to let the barbarian hordes of Muscovite communism subvert Christian institutions, annihilating lives, defiling souls, and transforming all of Portugal into an immense sea of blood and carnage, and a vast and horrible field of debris and smoking ruins!»²⁵⁰ These words are especially remarkable as they were written before the Spanish Civil War broke out.

After having intimately collaborated in the work of Dona Luisa Andaluz in 1934, Canon Formigao founded a special institute, “Congregation of Sisters of Reparation of Our Lady of Sorrows of Fatima”, with the goal of fulfilling the ideal of reparation according to the Message of Fatima. Canonically approved on August 15, 1949, the new congregation developed rapidly. As of 1986, it numbered eight houses in Portugal and one in Germany. At the Cova da Iria, the nuns ensure that there is perpetual adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament exposed in the chapel of the hospital, located behind the Capelinha.

What admirable fecundity in the message of Our Lady, which the little seer on her deathbed passed on to the priest destined to put it in practice.

«IF THEY ONLY KNEW WHAT ETERNITY WAS!»

Among the innumerable “logia” or sayings which Mother Godinho attributed to Jacinta, a few others came to be added in passing years, with reasonable

probability of authenticity; Canon Formigao records them in his book of 1927, “The Great Miracles of Fatima”. Canon Formigao collected these sayings shortly after the death of Jacinta, and they undoubtedly correspond (if not word for word) to things the little seer really said. As a matter of fact, we know through Sister Lucy how frightened Jacinta was by the thought of so many souls falling into hell.²⁵¹

«Among the visitors and nurses were many who offended Jacinta by their over-decorative dress, often immodest as well. Pointing out certain necklaces and other forms of jewellery, Jacinta would say: “What is it all for? If they only knew what eternity was!” And of some doctors who appeared to be unbelievers: “Poor things! If they knew what awaited them!”

«The seer affirmed that Our Lady had revealed to her that “the sins which lead the most people to hell are sins of the flesh; that people must give up luxury and impurity, that they must not remain obstinate in sin, and that they must do penance. It seems that as she said this, Our Lady looked very sad, for the child added: “Oh, I feel so bad for Our Lady! I feel so bad for Her!”»²⁵²

APPENDIX III - AN APOCRYPHAL MESSAGE «THE SECRET OF MOTHER GODINHO» (APRIL 25, 1954)

We have seen how “the secret” reserved for Canon Formigao concerns a very precise object, and was passed on to the intended recipient immediately. If we consider the way it was transmitted, the content, as well as the undeniable fruits of grace it engendered, it comes to us with solid guarantees of credibility.²⁵³ The same is not the case for the two other secrets which Mother Godinho claims she received from Jacinta, on the part of the Most Holy Virgin.

A NONEXISTENT SECRET. Regarding the secret supposedly destined for Dr. Lisboa, which Mother Godinho herself said she was unaware of, Father Alonso puts forward a very plausible hypothesis: Jacinta, who was sick at the hospital of Lisbon, asked insistently for a visit from “Senhor Doutor”... but this expression was frequently used by the little seers to designate... Dr. Formigao! Thus it may have been a simple mistake in the names, Jacinta in reality having no secret for Dr. Lisboa.²⁵⁴

“THE SECRET OF MOTHER GODINHO.” That leaves only the famous secret supposedly destined for Mother Godinho herself, known to us only by the letter she wrote to Pope Pius XII, on April 25, 1954. When it began to be partially divulged, around the year 1970, this secret caused quite a stir: did it not predict frightful cataclysms for the year 1972? An announcement of future events predicted for a precise date always makes a great impression. Moreover, several Portuguese authors took this text very seriously. In 1971, Father Messias Dias Coelho published the integral text of it once again, with a commentary which tended to favour its authenticity.²⁵⁵

Let us point out that at the same time, Father Alonso did not have any qualms about giving a decidedly opposing opinion. During the Third International Seminar on Fatima, from August 17 to 22, 1971, he was asked several times about this subject:

«“There is talk concerning a text of Jacinta for the year 1972. What should we think of it?” Response: “This text exists. It has been published twice by the revue Mensagem de Fatima, *but it does not merit critical confidence.*” Question: “Where is the original of Mother Godinho’s letter to the Pope? What is its content?” Response: “The letter is at Lisbon. As for its content, it is hard to say because the letter is long, but in general it deals with eschatological things. Finally, it is said that there will be a great calamity in the world in 1972.” Question: “Is it true that the year 1972 will be a year of great disasters? The texts speak of this date and no other.” Response: “This comes from Mother Godinho, *but she attributes so many things to the seer that it is impossible that she really said all that.*”»²⁵⁶

Events have proven the Fatima expert right. The fateful year 1972 went by without anything to verify the prophecy objectively. That might have settled the matter, and we could let this document fall back into the oblivion it merits, as Father Alonso seems to have wished. However, since we propose to give “the whole truth about Fatima”, it seems necessary, to get to the bottom of the matter, to quote the entire text and present a point by point critical commentary.²⁵⁷

«Prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, the humble and obscure Mother Mary of the Purification Godinho, who for forty years has worked at the foundation of an order of Franciscan Sisters, Claretians of expiation, beseeches Your Holiness to deign to give her and her sisters, who have been present at the foundation of this order, the necessary authorization to realize their ideal, cherished for so many

years and anxiously hoped for.

«For many years, I have been director of the orphanage of Our Lady of Miracles, at 17 Rua de Estrela, Lisbon, Portugal, and I am ever hopeful of the realization of this ideal. I have lived in community with some women who have a decided vocation for the religious life, regulating their entire life and actions according to the rule of Saint Claire and Mother “Mary da Costa”, a rule we have all observed since 1916 without interruption; we have combined the active life with the contemplative life, and consequently we are not cloistered, although we very much wish we could be. And all the women who feel a true calling and wish to embrace the religious state in this community must be daughters of a legitimate marriage, they must be Catholics, they must give up everything they have in the world, they must be chaste and virgins both in soul and body, they must be humble and obedient, and practice all forms of charity, they are bound to observe silence, and they must always, day and night, apply themselves to perpetual adoration.»

In this introduction we have the essence of the letter. It is perfectly clear, while the rest of the letter is confused, incoherent and disorderly. In 1954, Mother Godinho desired to obtain directly from the Holy Father what her bishop, Cardinal Cerejeira, had always refused her, in spite of her repeated fervent requests: canonical recognition of the nascent religious community gathered around her. But does not this text alone suffice to justify the refusal of the Patriarch of Lisbon? Clearly, whatever her good intentions might have been, Mother Godinho possessed neither the clear-sightedness, or instruction, or any other qualities necessary to claim the role of Foundress of a great religious order.

Here there would have been nothing more than the banal and rather frequent case of a new foundation not approved by the Church, if Mother Godinho had not had, in 1920, the merit of sheltering the little seer of Fatima. And due to the fortuitous absence of Canon Formigao, she had the additional honour of passing on to him the message the Blessed Virgin gave him through Jacinta. Such had been the role of Mother Godinho, and this admittedly entitles her to a certain amount of respect. But to go from that to attributing to herself the heavenly mission, comparable to the mission of Canon Formigao, of founding a congregation of Sisters of reparation – this is quite a jump... Indeed we see how in her ideal of religious life, Mother Godinho in the final analysis attributes the idea to the Blessed Virgin Herself, through the mediation of Jacinta. Now, very curiously, she goes on to mingle with the idea of this congregation prophetic

considerations of worldwide significance:

*«I am the godmother of Jacinta Marto, the seer of Fatima, who made me privy to the following secret, which I have kept religiously for many years, but now as I feel death approaching, I wish to communicate it to Your Holiness. Under oath I guarantee that what I say expresses purely and simply what I heard from her, and which forms **my secret**. Here is the essential part. “Mother, **tell the Holy Father** that the world is troubled and Our Lady can no longer hold back the arm of Her beloved Son, Who is very offended by the sins committed in the world. If, however, the world decides to do penance, She would come to its aid again, but if not, chastisement would infallibly fall upon it, **for its lack of obedience to the Holy Father.**»*

Is this last phrase the echo of an authentic revelation of Jacinta? If this were the case, it would be the only time Our Lady of Fatima developed this thought. For in none of the revelations which Sister Lucy received later on do we find a similar diagnosis for the cause of the chastisements threatening us. Heaven insists only on the offences against the Most Holy Virgin, and especially, as we will see, on the disobedience of the Pastors of the Church to the great designs of God in favour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.²⁵⁸

This mention of disobedience towards the Holy Father, on the other hand, appears closely related to what seems to be the dream, the *idée fixe* of Mother Godinho: a most intimate union of her community – which by the very fact would assume an exorbitant importance – with the Holy Father, or with the Vatican, *directly*, so as to compensate for the coldness and lack of understanding by the Cardinal Patriarch.

*«Jacinta then asked me **to tell the Holy Father and His Excellency, the Bishop of Leiria**, that the house I occupy at Fatima ought to be called “the House of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima”, and that the sisters of this order, **after their approval**, were to take the name of “Claretian Sisters of Mother Mary da Costa”, and that they would keep united to the Vatican to prepare for the year 1972, because the sins of impurity, vanity, and excessive luxury would bring great chastisements to the world, which would cause great suffering **to the Holy Father**. “Poor Holy Father!” she would say.*»

What a deluge of prophecies! At the moment these words were supposed to have been uttered by Jacinta, there was no building at the Cova da Iria except the tiny

“Capelinha”. Mother Godinho had no house. There was no Bishop of Leiria yet, for the diocese still did not have a titular named for it. Nor do we grasp the necessity of informing the Holy Father of such tiny details. Let us pass over the great cataclysm predicted for 1972. Let us likewise pass over the causes of the chastisement invoked here, concerning which Sister Lucy has never mentioned a word. As for the union of the Claretian Sisters of Mother Godinho with the Vatican for 1972, it was impossible, and for good reason. Indeed in 1960, when Mother Godinho died, the Cardinal Patriarch ordered the few religious living with her (all of whom, by the way, wanted to be in charge), to request admission into another community, or resume civil life. Thus the prophecy was not fulfilled at all.

«I could hardly believe these things; but Jacinta insisted, saying: “Godmother, **tell the Holy Father that Our Lady wishes this work to be the apple of the Holy Father’s eye, try therefore to talk to him about it**”; and among other things she said: “Our Lady wants there to be at the Cova da Iria a house for Her, the Mother of God, and that the Sisters who go there imitate Her virtues, and **expiate for the sins committed in other religious houses** (sic).” Among other things Our Lady told the seer: “In this house there will be rigorous silence, only what is absolutely necessary will be said, and nothing more; **nothing will be done without permission of His Holiness**, and the religious who live there under Our Lady’s roof will imitate the virtues of the Heavenly Mother; they will have no contact with the world and they will live a very retired life, **and it will behoove them to pray particularly for the Holy Father, uniting all their penitential practices to the Vatican, for the intention of...**”²⁵⁹

«I, a Sister of Saint Francis, Maria of the Purification, to whom the seer Jacinta revealed these things, understood nothing of these things, but it seems to me that she meant that wars would stop in the world only when men also finished (sic).

«At this moment I said to Jacinta that the Holy Father knew very well what he had to do and that Our Lord and Our Lady would inspire him so that it would be superfluous for me to tell him what the seer related to me. But she went on talking, and she said that the triumph of Our Lord still had to come, but beforehand there would be many tears, because in the world His Holy Will is not being accomplished. And she told me that she was distraught at not knowing how to express it better, but she wanted to try anyway: “**There is a secret of Heaven and another of the earth, and the latter is frightening, it already seems like the end of the world and in this cataclysm everything will be isolated from**

Heaven, which will become as white as snow.”»

Let us say unequivocally: it would be a waste of time to make heads or tails of these words. Mother Godinho goes on, continuing to jumble everything together:

*«Our Lady said that we must pray much and perform many “mortifications of the senses” (give up many things) because this is very pleasing to Our Lord, that we must love Our Lord with all our heart and respect priests because they are the salt of the earth, and their duty is to show souls the way to Heaven. **She also recommended often to the seer that I do nothing without the permission of the Holy Father and the Most Reverend Bishop of Leiria, and that she (Jacinta) ask me to tell Your Holiness, among other things, that Our Lady appeared to me here at the orphanage several times, and that she also appeared to the seer, before the latter went to the hospital of D. Estefania, and at this moment Jacinta felt such harmony that it seemed to her that she was already in the presence of God, and already enjoyed eternal glory for all eternity.»***

This last paragraph is decisive: Mother Godinho herself also supposedly saw the Blessed Virgin! Whoever wishes to believe this may do so. But in any case, what a curious way of letting us know. Instead of simply saying: “I saw the Blessed Virgin, who gave me such or such a mission,” Mother Godinho wraps herself once more in the cloak of Jacinta: the Most Holy Virgin asked Jacinta to ask Mother Godinho to tell the Holy Father that Mother Godinho had herself seen the Holy Virgin several times in her house on Rua de Estrela, just as Jacinta had several times seen Her! What a mess!

«This long but loyal exposition which I have made, being concluded, the humblest of your servants casts herself at the feet of Your Holiness as she kisses your ring, full of respect.

*Mother Maria of the Purification Godinho
April 25, 1954»*

THE AUTHENTIC DOCUMENT... For clarity’s sake let us point out that this document is not a fake, as certain authors affirmed. We know in fact that Mother Godinho had made a copy of her letter to Pope Pius XII. In July, 1983, we received firsthand the testimony of a priest who shortly before the death of Mother Godinho had this copy in his hand and recopied it exactly. He confirmed to us that the published version is perfectly identical with the original.²⁶⁰

... OF AN APOCRYPHAL “SECRET”. That being said, following Father Alonso, and as another Fatima expert who knew Mother Godinho well advised us, «we have reason to be critical». Fatima rests upon unquestionable facts and testimony. The declarations of Mother Godinho, on the contrary, upon examination appear groundless.

1) *The visions*. There is no solid reason to take seriously the claim of Mother Godinho that she herself saw the Most Holy Virgin in 1920. An apparition which took place precisely when Jacinta was in her house. An apparition concerning which she tells us not a thing. The only guarantee put forward for this apparition is that Our Lady supposedly expressly willed that the Pope be informed. Let us be permitted to ask: Why? When Mother Godinho reports this event to the Holy Father, in such a rambling formula, at the age of seventy-six and thirty-four years after the event, we have every reason to believe she is making it up. No doubt this is unconscious. For a simple internal criticism of the letter shows that at the time Mother Godinho wrote it, she did not enjoy perfect psychic equilibrium. It is useless to explain this away, as does Father Messias Dias Coelho, by her total lack of culture. She knew how to read and write, and we find under her pen a good number of themes borrowed from what she had read, whether from Fatima or from other subjects. Saint Bernadette knew even less than Mother Godinho, and Saint Joan of Arc even less. Their testimony sparkles with good sense, intelligence, and the clear thinking of peasant folk. The same can be said of Sister Lucy in her Memoirs, which trace an extraordinarily lively, coherent and down-to-earth portrait of Jacinta.

2) «*My secret*» for the Holy Father. The confusion and imprecision of the secret Mother Godinho supposedly was given to transmit to the Holy Father – the total absence of clarity which she attributes, in passing, to Jacinta herself – is a clear sign that it is a subjective elaboration. Moreover, here is another telltale sign: if we reread the letter, we see that she has nothing to reveal to the Pope which really concerns him, still less anything to ask of him. Except one thing: recognition of the institute of Mother Godinho, because «the Blessed Virgin wishes this work to be the apple of the Holy Father’s eye.»

3) *The apocalyptic prophecies*. This, of course, is what drew attention to this letter before 1972. Since this date passed without them being verified, there is no longer any motive to give them the least credit. It is regrettable that this or that Portuguese author continues to present these texts as an integral part of the message of Fatima.²⁶¹

4) *The mission to become a foundress.* As for the mission of founding a new religious congregation, which Mother Godinho claims to have received from Our Lady through Jacinta, this also is surely an illusion. Subsequent events themselves have demonstrated that. Charged with making known to another the mission she believed she had, did not Mother Godinho come to believe, little by little, that this mission came to her from Heaven as well? This supposed “secret” and this “mission” she claims in her letter, are they not a simple copy of those of Canon Formigao? In any case it seems that, by a process well known to psychologists, in this letter Mother Godinho came to transpose her own ideal of religious life, her own thoughts and imaginings, her own resolute desire to have a religious house at the Cova da Iria like the others – that is, she transposed her own thoughts onto the will of the Blessed Virgin as passed on by Jacinta.

Conclusion: On her deathbed at the hospital in Lisbon, Jacinta received from the Most Holy Virgin one and only one “secret”: the one destined for Canon Formigao. “The secret of Mother Godinho” appears to us an apocryphal text, a subjective construction elaborated from this authentic message which did not concern her. Under her pen, and in her imagination, diverse recollections are mingled in inextricable fashion: the plausible together with the incredible.²⁶²

Of course, it is quite deplorable that the message of Fatima, so clear and limpid, of which Sister Lucy is the faithful and sure depositary, be saddled with this pseudo-message. Like a parasite, there is always the risk that it harm the living organism from which it lives. But did not Saint Francis have his Fioretti, more or less fantasy-ridden, and did not Our Lord Himself have the apocryphal Gospels? It is sufficient to be aware of these things and use a prudent criticism. In the final analysis, these regrettable adjuncts bring out more clearly by way of contrast, the supernatural character of the authentic Message of Fatima. The authentic message is proven by striking miracles and clear prophecies which were all fulfilled. We need only recall, for example, the way the great miracle of October 13 was predicted three months in advance, the prophecy of Russia’s role in spreading its errors and stirring up wars, the prediction of the Second World War, or the special protection enjoyed by Portugal. Among others, these are all so many sure guarantees which permit us to distinguish the perfectly credible statements from those which are not.

CHAPTER V

LUCY: «JESUS WISHES TO USE YOU» (1917 - 1925)

To understand the life of our three seers from within, in its most profound truth, we must look at it in the very light of God, who in His Providence fixed for each of them a distinct vocation in the service of the great design of Love revealed by His Most Holy Mother at Fatima. In other words, we must always go back to the apparition of June 13 when, just as in the Annunciation, their personal futures were prophetically revealed.

Our Lady had announced at that time: «Jacinta and Francisco, I will take them (to Heaven) soon, *but you, Lucy, will remain here for a certain time. Jesus wishes to use you to make Me known and loved.* He wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart...»

Before becoming, at the appointed hour, the messenger of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Her desires as regards the Church and the world, Lucy had two essential tasks to accomplish. First of all, she was to give unceasing testimony, clear and forceful testimony, concerning everything she had seen and heard, at least concerning everything she could make known at the moment. Then she had to obey the pressing request which the Blessed Virgin Mary had addressed to her the same day: «*I want you to learn how to read so that I can tell you what I want.*»²⁶³ Thus she would have to read, study, and develop her mind before being able to pass on the messages of Heaven to the Church: «Jesus wishes to use you, to make Me known and loved.»

I. LUCY, WITNESS OF THE APPARITIONS

Going back in time a little bit, let us return to the eldest of our three seers after the great apparition of October 13, 1917. She reports in her Memoirs:

«My mother had to sell our flock. We kept only three sheep, which we took along with us when we went to the fields. Whenever we stayed at home, we kept them in the pen and fed them there. My mother then sent me to

school,²⁶⁴ and in my free time, she wanted me to learn weaving and sewing. In this way, she had me safe in the house, and didn't have to waste any time looking for me.»²⁶⁵

LUCY, THE PRINCIPAL WITNESS

After October 13, Lucy writes, «almost every day, from then on, people went to the Cova da Iria to implore the protection of our Heavenly Mother. Everybody wanted to see the seers, to question them, and to recite the Rosary with them.

«At times, I was so tired of saying the same thing over and over again, and also of praying, that I looked for any pretext for excusing myself, and making my escape. But those poor people were so insistent that I had to make an effort, and indeed no small effort, in order to satisfy them. I then repeated my usual prayer deep down in my heart: “O my God, it is for love of You, in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the conversion of sinners, and for the Holy Father.”²⁶⁶

Since Jacinta bitterly regretted having spoken too much, and since Francisco with great humility always showed himself extremely circumspect, the duty of responding to visitors' questions fell principally to Lucy. Lucy records an example: «One day, I asked Francisco: “When you are questioned, why do you put your head down and not want to answer?” “Because I want you to answer, and Jacinta too. I didn't hear anything. I can only say that I saw. Then, supposing I said something you didn't want me to say?”»²⁶⁷ Lucy adds: «As Jacinta was in the habit of putting her head down, keeping her eyes fixed on the ground and scarcely uttering a word during the interrogations, I was usually called upon to satisfy the curiosity of the pilgrims.»²⁶⁸

Very often also, our three seers made themselves scarce when people approached who looked like they had come to ask questions. Far from desiring to be seen and honoured by the visitors, they fled company as much as they could. Sometimes this led to a clever ruse:

«In this connection (Lucy writes), it might be good to relate here an incident which shows to what extent Jacinta sought to escape from the people who came looking for her.

«We were on our way to Fatima one day, and approaching the main road, when we noticed a group of ladies and gentlemen get out of a car. We knew without the slightest doubt that they were looking for us. Escape was impossible, for they would see us. We continued on our way, hoping to pass by without being recognized. On reaching us, the ladies asked if we knew the little shepherds to whom Our Lady had appeared. We said we did. “Do you know where they live?” We gave them precise directions, and ran off to hide in the fields among the brambles. Jacinta was so delighted with the result of her little stratagem, that she exclaimed: “We must do this always when they don’t know us by sight.”²⁶⁹

«Another day, we were sitting in the shade of two fig trees overhanging the road that runs by my cousins’ house. Francisco began to play a little way off. He saw several ladies coming towards us and ran back to warn us. We promptly climbed up the fig trees. In those days it was the fashion to wear hats with brims as wide as a sieve, and we were sure that with such headgear, those people would never catch sight of us up there. As soon as the ladies had gone by, we came down as fast as we could, took to our heels and hid in a cornfield.”²⁷⁰

Who could blame our three shepherds for taking such an attitude? On the contrary, it is gratifying to see them react as regular children, with joyous simplicity, and good-natured “mischievousness”. But on a more profound level, in this way they demonstrated true humility: they are so convinced they have nothing to teach their visitors, who already surely know everything they could tell them. No, we can truthfully say that the apparitions did not go to their head! Far from taking advantage of their role as little seers, it costs them an effort to receive the pilgrims and answer them. «I offer Our Lord all the sacrifices I can think of», Francisco said. «Sometimes (not “always”, for that would be asking too much!) I don’t even run away from all those people, just in order to make sacrifices!»²⁷¹ Jacinta said the same thing on one occasion, when Lucy and Francisco were running away from these pesky strangers as fast as their legs could carry them: «I’m not going to hide. I’m going to offer this sacrifice to Our Lord.»²⁷²

THE PRIESTS: MERCILESS INQUISITORS

«I was continually being summoned to the house of the parish priest. On

one occasion, a priest from Torres Novas²⁷³ came to question me. When he did so, he went into such minute details and tried so hard to trip me up that afterwards I felt some scruples about having concealed certain things from him. I consulted my cousins on the matter:

«“I don’t know”, I told them, “if we are doing wrong by not telling everything, when they ask us if Our Lady told us anything else. When we just say that She told us a secret, I don’t know whether we are lying or not, by saying nothing about the rest.” “I don’t know”, replied Jacinta. “That’s up to you! You’re the one who does not want us to say anything!” “Of course I don’t want you to say anything”, I answered. “Why, they’ll start asking us what sort of mortifications we are practising! And that would be the last straw!...”

«I was left with my misgivings, and had no idea as to how I was to resolve my doubt. A little while later, another priest appeared; he was from Santarem. He looked like a brother of the first I’ve just spoken of, or at least they seemed to have rehearsed things together: asking the same questions, making the same attempts to trip me up, laughing and making fun of me in the same way; in fact their very height and features were almost identical.

«After this interrogation, my doubt was stronger than ever, and I really did not know what course of action to follow. I constantly pleaded with Our Lord and Our Lady to tell me what to do. “O my God, and my dearest Mother in Heaven, You know that I do not want to offend You by telling lies; but You are well aware that it would not be right to tell them all that You told me!”»²⁷⁴

It was also this constant concern to preserve their Secret intact, which moved our three seers to flee from interrogations, especially those of the priests, some of whom had no scruples about using the most odious procedures with them: threats, insults, lies.²⁷⁵

Lucy recalls:

«This habit we had of making good our escape, whenever possible, was yet another cause for complaint on the part of the parish priest. He bitterly complained of the way we tried to avoid priests in particular. His Reverence

was certainly right. It was priests especially who put us through the most rigorous cross-examinations, and then returned to question us all over again. Whenever we found ourselves in the presence of a priest, we prepared to offer to God one of our greatest sacrifices!»²⁷⁶

SOME “GOOD SHEPHERDS”

THE DEAN OF OLIVAL: “HE WAS MY FIRST SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR.” Some priests, fortunately, were an exception, and they were able to recognize the sincerity of the seers, admire their candour, their piety, and their generosity. We have already mentioned Canon Formigao, who was undoubtedly the first of these “good shepherds”.²⁷⁷ But Lucy was soon to find, in the person of Father Faustino Jacinto Ferreira, the dean of Olival, a wise and kind advisor, a real spiritual Father.

Lucy was still tormented over her deliberately incomplete responses to the priest from Torres Novas, as well as his brother, when she met Father Faustino:

«In the midst of this perplexity, I had the happiness of speaking to the Vicar of Olival. I do not know why, but His Reverence inspired confidence, and I confided my doubt to him...»²⁷⁸ What was I to say to those who asked if the Holy Virgin had said something more, and avoid lying? This priest said to us: «You do well, my little ones, to keep the secret of your souls between God and yourselves. When they put that question to you, just answer: “Yes, She did say more, but it’s a secret.” If they question you further on this subject, think of the Secret that the Lady made known to you, and say: “Our Lady told us not to say anything to anybody; for this reason, we are saying nothing.” In this way, you can keep your secret under cover of Our Lady’s.» «How well I understood the explanation and guidance of this venerable old priest», comments Lucy.²⁷⁹

«He also gave us some further instructions on the spiritual life. Above all, he taught us to give pleasure to Our Lord in everything, and how to offer Him countless little sacrifices. “If you feel like eating something, my children”, he would say, “leave it, and eat something else instead; and thus offer a sacrifice to God. If you feel inclined to play, do not do so, and offer to God another sacrifice. If people question you, and you cannot avoid answering them, it is God who wills it so: offer Him this sacrifice, too.”

«This holy priest spoke a language that I could really understand, and I loved him dearly.

«From then on, he never lost sight of my soul. Now and then, he called me in to see me, or kept in touch with me through a pious widow called Mrs. Emilia, who lived in a little hamlet near Olival. She was very devout, and often went to pray at the Cova da Iria. After that, she used to come to our house and ask them to let me go and spend a few days with her. Afterwards, she took me to visit the Reverend Vicar.

«He was kind enough to invite me to remain for two or three days as company for one of his sisters. At such times, he was patient enough to spend whole hours alone with me, teaching me the practice of virtue and guiding me with his own wise counsels.

«Even though at that time I did not understand anything about spiritual direction, I can truly say that he was my first spiritual director. I cherish, therefore, grateful and holy memories of this saintly priest.»²⁸⁰

“THE SECRET OF THE KING’S DAUGHTER...” Around the same time, Lucy also received the visit of another priest who counselled her with great discretion. She writes:

«I remember, besides, a saying that I heard from a holy priest when I was only eleven years old. Like so many others, he came to question me, and asked among other things, about a matter about which I did not wish to speak. After he had exhausted his whole repertoire of questions, without succeeding in obtaining a satisfactory answer on this subject, realizing perhaps that he was touching on too delicate a matter, the good priest gave me his blessing and said: “You are right, my child. The secret of the king’s daughter should remain hidden in the depths of her heart.”

«At the time, I did not understand the meaning of what he said, but I realized that he approved of my manner of acting. I did not forget his words, however, and I understand them now. This saintly priest was at that time Vicar of Torres Novas. Little does he know all the good that these few words did for my soul, and that is why I remember him with such gratitude.»²⁸¹

LUCY QUESTIONED BY A SAINT: THE VISIT OF FR. CRUZ. Lucy writes: «One day we were told that a priest was coming to see us who was very holy and who could tell what was going on in people's inmost hearts. This meant that he would find out whether we were telling the truth or not. Full of joy, Jacinta exclaimed: "When is this Father coming? If he can really tell, then he'll know we're telling the truth."²⁸² Had the arrival of good Father Cruz been announced to the children beforehand? This is quite possible, for he enjoyed a great reputation for sanctity in all Portugal.²⁸³ In any case, Lucy tells us how he came to Aljustrel one day to interrogate the three seers:

«When he had finished, he asked us to show him the spot where Our Lady had appeared to us. On the way we walked on either side of His Reverence, who was riding a donkey so small that his feet almost touched the ground.

«As we went along, he taught us a litany of ejaculations, two of which Jacinta made her own and never stopped repeating ever afterwards: "O my Jesus, I love You! Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!"»²⁸⁴

Thanks to the favourable judgment of these few priests, the prejudices of the clergy evaporated, and the apparitions could finally be recognized by the Bishop of Leiria. We shall see what an important role Canon Formigao and the Dean of Olival were to play during the canonical process. As for Father Cruz, he was the first priest to dare openly preach devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. In his report on Jacinta, Doctor Lisboa testifies to this:

«I saw him at Fatima during the first visits I made over there. I heard him give – for the first time in a church at Lisbon – a public allocution exhorting people to pray to Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, at a time when most of the clergy was still afraid to show any sentiments favourable to the apparitions.»²⁸⁵

THE TENACIOUS OPPOSITION OF THE PARISH PRIEST OF FATIMA

These resolutely favourable judgments on the three seers – emanating, what is more, from priests with great common sense, pious and zealous priests who were unquestionably "men of God" – are extremely valuable for us. They compensate for the enigmatic, bewildering attitude of the parish priest of Fatima, who continued taking a "hard line" position against the apparitions. Clearly he was

intellectually convinced of the supernatural character of the apparitions,²⁸⁶ especially after October 13, 1917. Nevertheless, he still kept a latent animosity with respect to the seers, which was noticeable on every occasion.

Why this persistent rancour? It is not difficult to guess some of the reasons: because he was an enterprising and imperious, somewhat domineering man, the secrecy and extreme reserve of the children towards him irritated him; it offended and exasperated him. And now, the nascent beginnings of the pilgrimage to Fatima constituted an open competition to the work he was trying to accomplish in the parish. The pilgrimage did not have the approval of the Patriarch; it was neither approved nor disapproved; this meant that the parish priest was “left hanging”, which caused him to become bitter and spiteful towards the children. Granted, to handle such a delicate situation irreproachably, the parish priest would have needed total detachment, and uncommon qualities of soul...

What is certain, in any case, is that our three seers, and especially Lucy, had much to suffer from the perplexities and resentment of their parish priest. In her Memoirs, Lucy mentions the growing irritation on his part:

«The parish priest questioned me for the last time. The events had duly come to an end at the appointed time, and still His Reverence did not know what to say about the whole affair. He was also beginning to show his displeasure. “Why are all those people going to prostrate themselves in prayer in a deserted spot like that, while here the living God of our altars, in the Most Holy Sacrament, is left all alone, abandoned, in the tabernacle? What’s all the money for, the money they leave for no purpose whatsoever under the holm-oak, while the church, which is still under repairs, cannot be completed for lack of funds?”

«I understood perfectly why he spoke like that, but what could I do! If I had been given authority over the hearts of those people, I would certainly have led them to the parish church, but as I did not, I offered to God yet another sacrifice.»²⁸⁷

Another episode, which clearly shows the stubborn animosity of the parish priest, Father Ferreira, with regard to the seers, has almost invariably been omitted by historians. Sister Lucy, however, albeit without any trace of bitterness, saw fit to relate the whole episode in her Memoirs. And she is right,

for in this painful history, the rank prejudice of the parish priest becomes obvious, as do some of his character flaws. It shows especially on this occasion, when two holy and prudent priests dared to take up, against him, the defence of the seer. The incident most probably took place in the autumn of 1918. Here is the account given in the Memoirs:²⁸⁸

«One fine day, my sisters were asked to go with some other girls to help with the vintage on the property of a wealthy man of Pe de Cao...²⁸⁹ My mother decided to let them go, as long as I could go too...» The Solemn Communion of the parish was to take place while they were away. But since Lucy had already renewed it each year since the age of six, Maria Rosa judged that she could be dispensed from it, as well as the catechism classes to prepare the children. As soon as school was over, Lucy went home to continue her sewing and weaving. Her account continues:

«The good priest did not take kindly to my absence from catechism classes. One day, on my way home from school, his sister sent another child after me. She caught up with me on the road to Aljustrel... Thinking that I was just wanted for questioning, I excused myself, saying that my mother had told me to go home right after school. Without further ado, I took to my heels across the fields like a mad thing, in search of a hiding place where no one could find me.

«But this time, the prank cost me dearly. Some days later, there was a big feast in the parish, and several priests came from all around to sing the Mass. When it was over, the parish priest sent for me, and in front of all those priests, reprimanded me severely for not attending the catechism lessons, and for not running back to his sister when she had sent for me. In short, all my faults and failings were brought to light, and the sermon went on for quite a long while.

«At last, though I don't know how, a holy priest appeared on the scene, and sought to plead my cause. He tried to excuse me, saying that perhaps my mother had not given me permission. But the good priest replied: "*Her mother! Why, she's a saint! But as for this one, it remains to be seen what she'll turn out to be!*" The good priest, who later became Vicar of Torres Novas,²⁹⁰ then asked me very kindly why I had not been to the catechism classes. I therefore told him of my mother's decision.

«His Reverence did not seem to believe me, and sent for my sister Gloria who was over by the church, to find out the truth of the matter. Having found that indeed things were just as I had said, he came to this conclusion: “Well then! Either the child is going to attend the catechism classes for the days still remaining, *and afterwards come to me for confession*, and then make her Solemn Communion with the rest of the children, or *she’s never going to receive Communion again in this parish!*”»

Gloria, and then Maria Rosa herself went over to the presbytery. They tried to explain that if the parish priest insisted on this order, someone else would have to take the little child over to Torres Novas. Their efforts were in vain. They begged the priest to consider the distance and difficulty of the trip. Again in vain. The stubborn priest would not change his mind. No matter what, Lucy would have to renew her Solemn Communion! Lucy’s account continues:

«I think I must have had a cold sweat at the mere idea of having to go to confession to the parish priest! What fear I had before him! I cried with anguish. On the day before the Solemn Communion, His Reverence sent for all the children to go to church in the afternoon to make their confession. As I went, anguish gripped my heart as in a vice.»

THE INTERVENTION OF GOOD FR. CRUZ. Just as in the case of Lucy’s First Communion in 1913, it so happened (by a marvellous act of Providence!) that Father Cruz was there to intervene:

«As I entered the church, I saw that there were several priests hearing confessions. There at the end of the church was Reverend Father Cruz from Lisbon. I had spoken to His Reverence before, and I liked him very much indeed. Without noticing that the parish priest was in an open confessional halfway up the church, I thought to myself: “First, I’ll go and make my confession to Father Cruz and ask him what I am to do, and then I’ll go to the parish priest.”

«Father Cruz received me with the greatest kindness. After hearing my confession, he gave me some advice, telling me that if I did not want to go to the parish priest, I should not do so; and that he could not refuse me Communion for something like that. I was radiant with joy on hearing this advice and said my penance. Then I made good my escape from the church, for fear lest somebody might call me back.

«Next day, I went to the church all dressed in white, still afraid that I might be refused Communion. But His Reverence contented himself with letting me know, when the feast was over, that my lack of obedience in going to another priest had not passed unnoticed.»²⁹¹

THE DEPARTURE OF FATHER FERREIRA. Since he did not fear to manifest his irritation publicly, Father Ferreira's position became more and more unbearable. Ti Marto told Canon Barthas: «Father Ferreira was the last person in the whole country to believe in the apparitions...» Around this time, the neighbouring faithful organized a procession from Moita to the Cova da Iria. A priest from the area preached a sermon.²⁹² «That annoyed Father Ferreira (Ti Marto said). Soon, he began saying that he wanted to leave the area, so upset was he. Indeed, he left the parish of his own accord, even before a successor was named.»²⁹³ He left Fatima in the beginning of June, 1919.

Here is Lucy's version of the facts: «The good priest grew more and more displeased and perplexed concerning these events until, one day, he left the parish. The news then went around that His Reverence had left on account of me.» In fact, as Father Alonso points out, he had also run into numerous difficulties with his parishioners regarding the construction of a church, and this was equally the cause of his departure.

Lucy, however, was to suffer cruelly for it: «Several pious (?) women, whenever they met me, gave vent to their displeasure by insulting me; and sometimes they sent me on my way with a couple of blows or kicks.»²⁹⁴

II. IN THE SCHOOL OF SUFFERING: «WILL I REMAIN HERE ALL ALONE?»

APRIL 4, 1919: THE DEATH OF FRANCISCO

After 1919, death was to strike several times among Sister Lucy's loved ones; her painful loneliness became deeper and deeper... On April 4, it was Francisco who flew on to Heaven. The evening before, when night was already falling, they had spoken for the last time:

«“Goodbye, then, Francisco! Till we meet in Heaven, goodbye!...” Heaven was drawing near for him. He took his flight to Heaven the following day in

the arms of his Heavenly Mother.

«I could never describe how much I missed him. This grief was a thorn that pierced my heart for years to come. It is a memory of the past that echoes forever unto eternity.»²⁹⁵

JULY 1, 1919: JACINTA AT VILA NOVA DE OUREM

Three months later, Lucy had to endure another separation: Jacinta left Aljustrel for the hospital of Vila Nova de Ourem... During this three month separation, the two friends could meet only twice, and for such short visits!

JULY 31, 1919: THE DEATH OF ANTONIO

«Once again (Lucy writes) Our Lord came knocking at my door to ask yet another sacrifice, and not a small one either. My father was a healthy man, and robust; he said he had never known what it was to have a headache. But, in less than twenty-four hours, an attack of double pneumonia carried him off into eternity.

«My sorrow was so great that I thought I would die as well. He was the only one who never failed to show himself to be my friend, and the only one who defended me when disputes arose at home on account of me.

«“My God! My God!” I exclaimed in the privacy of my room. “I never thought You had so much suffering in store for me! But I suffer for love of You, in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the Holy Father and for the conversion of sinners.”»²⁹⁶

In this intense sorrow, Maria Rosa and her family nevertheless had one consolation: Antonio died reconciled with God. He had gone to confession a few days before on the feast of Our Lady of the Nettles.²⁹⁷

On August 31, Lucy had the joy of seeing Jacinta again as the latter returned to Aljustrel, even more ill than before her stay at the hospital. We may believe that for the two confidantes of Our Lady, these last months spent together were at the same time both sweet and cruelly sorrowful. For the little child's health grew alarmingly worse, and one sad day in December, Lucy learned that her

companion was about to leave. This time, indeed, Jacinta was leaving for good, for Our Lady Herself had come to announce it to her: «She hugged me and wept: “I will never see you again! You won’t be coming to visit me there. Oh please, pray hard for me, because I am going to die alone...”»²⁹⁸

And Lucy grew sad, just as on June 13, 1917, when Our Lady had foretold what would happen for the first time. Lucy wept because she would have to «*stay all alone*». She said to Jacinta: «It won’t be long now till you go to Heaven. But what about me!» Jacinta in her turn tried to console Lucy: «You poor thing! Don’t cry! I’ll pray lots and lots for you when I’m there. As for you, that’s the way Our Lady wants it. If She wanted that for me, I’d gladly stay and suffer more for sinners.»²⁹⁹

WINTER 1919: THE ILLNESS OF MARIA ROSA

For Lucy, in this year 1919, there was no lack of opportunities to offer sacrifices:

«Such suffering on my part must have been pleasing to Our Lord (she writes), because He was about to prepare a most bitter chalice for me which He was soon to give me to drink.

«My mother fell so seriously ill that, at one stage, we thought she was dying.» Maria dos Anjos, who also left us an account of the event, was more specific: «She had violent attacks of coughing, and the doctor said that they were cardiac failures. We all wept, because we had already lost our father...»³⁰⁰

Sister Lucy continues: «All her children gathered around her bed to receive her last blessing, and to kiss the hand of their dying mother.

«As I was the youngest, my turn came last. When my poor mother saw me, she brightened a little, flung her arms around my neck and, with a deep sigh, exclaimed: “My poor daughter, what will become of you without your mother! I am dying with my heart pierced through because of you.” Then, bursting into tears and sobbing bitterly, she clasped me more and more tightly in her arms. My eldest sister forcibly pulled me away from my mother, took me to the kitchen and forbade me to go back to the sick room, saying: “Mother is going to die of grief because of all the trouble you’ve

given her!” I knelt down, put my head on a bench, and in a distress more bitter than any I had ever known before, I made the offering of my sacrifice to Our Dear Lord.

«A few minutes later, my two older sisters, thinking the case was hopeless, came to me and said: “Lucy! If it is true that you saw Our Lady, go right now to the Cova da Iria, and ask Her to cure our mother. Promise Her whatever you wish and we’ll do it; and then we’ll believe!”

«Without losing a moment, I set out. So as not to be seen, I made my way across the fields across some bypaths, reciting the Rosary along the way. Once there, I placed my request before Our Lady and unburdened myself of all my sorrow, shedding copious tears. I then went home, comforted by the hope that my beloved Mother in Heaven would hear my prayer and restore health to my mother on earth.

«When I reached home, my mother was already feeling somewhat better. Three days later, she was able to resume her work around the house.

«I had promised the Most Holy Virgin that, if She granted me what I asked, I would go there in nine days in succession, together with my sisters, pray the Rosary and go on our knees from the roadway to the holm-oak tree; and on the ninth day we would take nine poor children with us, and afterwards give them a meal...»³⁰¹

Maria dos Anjos recalls that Lucy had also brought a little bit of earth from the Cova da Iria. Lucy asked her sister to prepare a herbal drink for their mother. Maria Rosa was intrigued by «such dirty water», but she drank it nevertheless... No doubt we will think: now there is a strange idea! But at Lourdes, as a sign of penance, had not Our Lady asked Bernadette to «drink of the fountain», from which there came only «a little bit of water which resembled mud», and then to eat the herbs there?

In any case, Maria dos Anjos observes: «The cardiac problems disappeared on the spot. Nor did she have any more problems with suffocation. She was breathing well. Her heart was working better, and soon she was able to get up. She was not entirely healed, and she did not recover all her strength. Nevertheless, she could still work a great deal after that; indeed she seemed younger than her age.

«We, her daughters, did not hesitate to go to the Cova da Iria, to keep the promise we had made. Nine days in a row – after supper, because we had to work for our bread, and also so as not to be noticed – we went on our knees, from the place where the porch is now, over to the little chapel, where we recited the Rosary. Our mother also made the novena, walking behind us.»³⁰²

Inspired by Our Lady, Lucy had just made with her sisters a penitential gesture which would soon become familiar to the pilgrims of Fatima: they can still be seen today, advancing on their knees, crossing the esplanade clear through to the Capelinha.

BRIEF VISITS AWAY FROM HOME: «I AM NEITHER A SAINT... NOR A LIAR!»

«Several people who came from a distance to see us, noticing that I looked very pale and anaemic, asked my mother to let me go and spend a few days in their homes, saying the change of air would do me good. With this end in view, my mother gave her consent, and they took me with them, now to one place, now to another.

«When away from home like this, I did not always meet with esteem and affection. While there were some who admired me and considered me a saint, there were always others who heaped abuse on me and called me a hypocrite, a visionary and a sorceress. This was the good Lord's way of throwing salt into the water to prevent it from going bad.

«Thanks to this Divine Providence, I went through the fire without being burned, or without becoming acquainted with the little worm of vanity which has the habit of gnawing its way into everything. On such occasions, I used to say to myself: "They are all mistaken. I'm not a saint, as some say, and I'm not a liar either, as others say. Only God knows what I am."

«When I got home, I would run to see Jacinta, who said: "Listen! Don't go away again. I have been so lonely for you! Since you went away, I have not spoken to anyone. I don't know how to talk to other people."»³⁰³

JANUARY 21, 1920: JACINTA'S DEPARTURE

Finally, in January of 1920, it was decided that Jacinta would leave for Lisbon to have an operation. On January 21, the feast of Saint Agnes, the hour of the final separation arrived for these two confidantes of the Blessed Virgin, who were united to each other by so many extraordinary graces received together. What a heart-rending scene!

«How sad I was to find myself alone! In such a short space of time, Our Dear Lord had taken to Heaven my beloved father, and then Francisco,³⁰⁴ and now He was taking Jacinta, whom I was never to see again in this world.

«As soon as I could, I slipped away to the Cabeço, and hid within our cave among the rocks. There, alone with God, I poured forth my grief and shed tears in abundance. Coming back down the slope, everything reminded me of my dear companions: the stones on which we had so often sat, the flowers I no longer picked, not having anyone to take them to; Valinhos, where the three of us had enjoyed the delights of paradise! As though I had lost all sense of reality, and still half distracted, I went into my aunt's house one day and made for Jacinta's room, calling out to her. Her sister, Teresa, seeing me like that, barred the way, and reminded me that Jacinta was no longer there!»³⁰⁵

FEBRUARY 20, 1920: JACINTA'S DEATH

As Our Lady had predicted, during the long month Jacinta was at Lisbon, Lucy was not able to visit her a single time. They never saw each other again.

«Shortly afterwards (she writes in her Memoirs) news arrived that she had taken flight to Heaven. Her body was then brought back to Vila Nova de Ourem. My aunt took me there one day to pray beside the mortal remains of her little daughter, in the hope of thus distracting me. But for a long time after, my sorrow seemed only to grow ever greater. Whenever I found the cemetery open, I went and sat by Francisco's grave, or beside my father's, and there I spent long hours.»³⁰⁶

THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO PLACE LUCY IN A BOARDING SCHOOL

«During her last days, Jacinta requested insistently several times that the Reverend Doctor Manuel Formigao be called to her. She affirmed that Our Lady, during an apparition, had commanded her to pass on two messages to this venerable priest...

«The first concerned Lucy, already an adolescent, who as long as she remained on this earth was exposed to grave dangers. It was a warning Our Lady sent her for her to reflect on, and begin a more fervent life.»³⁰⁷

What were these «grave dangers» of the spiritual order which threatened Lucy? They can easily be guessed. This was the time of the development of the pilgrimage, which rapidly grew, in spite of all the vain efforts of the Masonic government to oppose it. Every thirteenth of the month saw thousands of people come to the Cova da Iria. And, since the hierarchical authority took a non-committal view, Lucy found herself at the head of the movement. More than ever, everybody wanted to see her, ask her questions. At times she was threatened by the members of the Masonic sect, but more often she was flattered, the object of adulation and formally taken for a saint. The situation of the seer became more and more perilous for her soul. For she was still only an adolescent, only thirteen years old, with neither instruction nor a solid spiritual formation...

Already, since October 13, 1917, Canon Formigao thought it better that the seers leave Fatima.³⁰⁸ Now he decided to intervene. The first time the suggestion had been made to Maria Rosa to place her daughter in a boarding school, so that Lucy could «learn to pray and read», she replied sharply: «If this is for her to learn how to pray, I'll teach her!»³⁰⁹ But in the end she was convinced and accepted Canon Formigao's wise suggestion. Thus it was agreed that Maria Rosa would accompany Lucy to Lisbon and take advantage of the trip to try to improve her health, consulting the doctors in the capital. Here we must let Sister Lucy speak again, and describe what happened:

THE SOJOURN AT LISBON AND SANTAREM: (JULY 7 - AUGUST 12, 1920)

«My mother, thank God, decided some time after this to go to Lisbon, and to take me with her. Through the kindness of Father Formigao, a good lady

received us into her house, and offered to pay for my education in a boarding school, if I was willing to remain. My mother and I gratefully accepted the offer of this charitable lady, whose name was Dona Assunção Avelar.

«My mother, after consulting the doctors, found that she needed an operation for kidneys and spinal column, but the doctors would not be responsible for her life, since she also suffered from a cardiac lesion. She therefore went home, leaving me in the care of this lady.

«When everything was ready, and the day arranged for my entering the boarding school, I was informed that the government was aware that I was in Lisbon, and was seeking my whereabouts. They, therefore, took me to Santarem, to Father Formigao's house, for several days [August 6 to August 12, according to Father Alonso] without even being allowed out to Mass... All these happenings distracted me somewhat, and so the oppressive sadness began to disappear.»³¹⁰

This first unsuccessful attempt at removing Lucy from the place of the apparitions did not change the mind of the prudent Canon Formigao. During this time the diocese of Leiria, providentially restored by a brief of Benedict XV dated January 17, 1918, finally received its new Shepherd after a long and painful wait. Appointed bishop on January 15, 1920, and consecrated on July 25, Bishop da Silva had solemnly taken possession of his diocese on August 5.

Right away Fatima became one of his major preoccupations. The new bishop still did not have a definite opinion on the nature of the events at the Cova da Iria; first he desired to be better informed. This is why he spoke with Canon Formigao as soon as he could. During a long conversation which took place on September 15, 1920, «together they dealt with three principal points: sending Lucy away into seclusion, the possibility of beginning a public cult at the Cova da Iria, and setting up a canonical process to investigate the events.»³¹¹

Months passed... and it was only in June of the following year that Canon Formigao's project could finally take shape. Bishop da Silva himself chose for Lucy the College of the Dorothean Sisters at Vilar, near Porto, where he had been chaplain. Moreover, being originally from the diocese of Porto, he still had some friends who could help in the formation of the seer.³¹²

JUNE 13, 1921: THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH BISHOP DA SILVA

Now we must quote a long passage from the Memoirs where Sister Lucy describes her first visit to the bishop's house. This account is full of freshness and spontaneity.

“IF HE KNOWS EVERYTHING, HE KNOWS THAT I SPEAK THE TRUTH!” «It was about this time that Your Excellency was installed as Bishop of Leiria, and Our Dear Lord confided to your care this poor flock that had been so many years without a shepherd. There were some people who tried to frighten me about Your Excellency's arrival, just as they had done before about another holy priest. They told me that Your Excellency knew everything, that you could read hearts and penetrate the depths of consciences, and that now you were going to discover all my deceptions. Far from frightening me, it made me earnestly desire to speak to you, and I thought to myself: “If it's true that he knows everything, he will know that I am speaking the truth!”

AT THE BISHOP OF LEIRIA'S RESIDENCE. «For this reason, as soon as a kind lady from Leiria offered to take me to see Your Excellency, I accepted her suggestion with joy. There was I, full of hope, in expectation of this happy moment. At last the day came, and the lady and I went to the Palace. We were invited to enter and shown to a room, where we were asked to wait for a little while.

«A few moments later, Your Excellency's secretary came in,³¹³ and spoke kindly with Dona Gilda who accompanied me. From time to time, he asked me some questions. As I had already been twice to confession to this priest, I already knew him, and it was therefore a pleasure to talk to him.

A PAINFUL INTERROGATION. «A little later, Rev. Dr. Marques dos Santos came in,³¹⁴ wearing shoes with buckles, and wrapped in a great big cloak. As it was the first time that I had seen a priest dressed like this, it caught my attention. He then embarked on a whole repertoire of questions that seemed unending. Now and again, he laughed, as though making fun of my replies, and it seemed as if the moment when I could speak to Your Excellency would never come.

A ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW. «At last, your secretary returned to speak

to the lady who was with me. He told her that when Your Excellency arrived, she was to make her apologies and take her leave, saying that she had to go elsewhere, since Your Excellency might wish to speak to me in private. I was delighted when I heard this message, and I thought to myself: as His Excellency knows everything, he won't ask me many questions, and he will be alone with me. What a blessing!

“A GOOD SHEPHERD.” «When Your Excellency arrived, the good lady played her part very well, and so I had the happiness of speaking to you alone. I am not going to describe now what happened during this interview, because Your Excellency certainly remembers it better than I do.

«To tell the truth, when I saw Your Excellency receive me with such kindness, without in the least attempting to ask me any useless or curious questions, being concerned only for the good of my soul, and only too willing to take care of this poor little lamb that the Lord had just entrusted to you, then I was more convinced than ever that Your Excellency did indeed know everything; and I did not hesitate for a moment to give myself completely into your hands.

«Thereupon, Your Excellency imposed certain conditions which, because of my nature, I found very easy: that is, to keep completely secret all that Your Excellency had said to me, and to be good. I kept my secret to myself, until the day when Your Excellency asked my mother's consent.»³¹⁵

Through whose mediation did Bishop da Silva ask for Maria Rosa's consent? In any case, things were arranged quickly, very quickly, since the date for Lucy's departure was fixed for June 16.³¹⁶ Lucy had just enough time to get ready and hastily prepare her things, and then bid adieu to the blessed places from which she was to be separated, for all time as she believed. However, she could not say goodbye to anybody, because the bishop had made her promise to keep the most absolute secrecy concerning her departure: “My child, you will not tell anybody where you are going.” “Yes, Your Excellency!”

«“When you go away you must come and say goodbye to me”, Maria da Capelinha (now her greatest friend) had told her a fortnight before. “Of course”, Lucy had assured her. But the bishop's command had to be rigorously obeyed. She must not say a word to anybody, not even to relatives and friends. No one must know that she was leaving Aljustrel

perhaps for ever, and was going to disappear into the College of the Dorotheans in Vilar, near Porto.»³¹⁷

JUNE 15, 1921: GOODBYE TO FATIMA

«Finally, the day of my departure was settled. The evening before, I went to bid farewell to all the familiar places so dear to us. My heart was torn with loneliness and longing, for I was sure I would never set foot again on the Cabeço, the Rock, Valinhos, or in the parish church where Our Dear Lord had begun His work of mercy, and the cemetery, where rested the mortal remains of my beloved father and of Francisco, whom I could still never forget.

«I said goodbye to our well, already illumined by the pale rays of the moon, and to the old threshing-floor where I had so often spent long hours contemplating the beauty of the starlit heavens, and the wonders of sunrise and sunset which so enraptured me. I loved to watch the rays of the sun reflected in the dew drops, so that the mountains seemed covered with pearls in the morning sunshine; and in the evening, after a snowfall, to see the snowflakes sparkling on the pine trees was like a foretaste of the beauties of paradise.»³¹⁸

JUNE 16, 1921: THE FINAL GRACE FROM THE COVA DA IRIA

«Without saying farewell to anyone, I left the next day at two o'clock in the morning, accompanied by my mother and a poor labourer named Manuel Correia, who was going to Leiria. I carried my secret with me, inviolate. We went by way of the Cova da Iria, so that I could bid it my last farewell. There, for the last time, I prayed my Rosary. As long as this place was still in sight, I kept turning around to say a last goodbye.»³¹⁹

What Sister Lucy did not write in her Memoirs, but confided to Canon Galamba during the course of her pilgrimage to Fatima from May 20-22, 1946, is that Our Lady then favoured her with a new apparition: «She recalled to me (Canon Galamba writes) how, on the day of her farewell to the Cova da Iria and departure for Porto, she had seen Our Lady once more, at the bottom of the little hill which faces the steps going up to the church. “And She said nothing to

you?” “Nothing.” But this vision, in this place and on this day, filled her soul with power to bear with love the cross which the Divine Spouse had placed upon her shoulders.»³²⁰

After arriving at Leiria about nine in the morning, Lucy and her mother went to the bishop’s residence. Once again, Bishop da Silva made his recommendations to the seer: she was to remain absolutely incognito, neither telling anybody who she was, nor saying anything related to the apparitions of Fatima.

Lucy continues her account in the Memoirs, in a passage addressed to her bishop:

«There I met Dona Filomena Miranda, whom Your Excellency had charged to accompany me. This lady was later to be my godmother at confirmation. The train left at two o’clock in the afternoon, and there I was at the station, giving my poor mother a last embrace, leaving her overwhelmed with sorrow and shedding abundant tears. The train moved out, and with it went my poor heart plunged in an ocean of loneliness and filled with memories that I could never forget.»³²¹

Early next morning, Dona Filomena took her to Vilar, in a suburb of Porto, to the College of the Dorothean Sisters where she was expected.

III. AT THE COLLEGE OF VILAR³²² **(JUNE 17, 1921 - OCTOBER 24, 1925)**

A COOL WELCOME

Early in the morning of June 17, Lucy and her patroness knocked on the door of the college at Asilo de Vilar. As Mass was about to begin, they were taken right away to the chapel, and Lucy had the joy of being able to receive Holy Communion. Immediately after, she was presented to the superior of the institute, Mother Maria das Dores Magalhaes.

The historian Antero de Figueiredo, who romanticized the event somewhat, described the scene of this first encounter thus:³²³

«Finally, Lucy arrived in the sacristy, where the chaplain and the directress

were waiting for her... Fixing her kind and intelligent eyes on the rustic appearance of this fourteen-year-old peasant – a real “mountain maid”, with their way of looking at you, eyes half-closed, through thick eyebrows, with her thick lips and large mouth – the directress could not help saying to the chaplain, in a low voice, “she sure is a wild animal!”»

Then she gave the seer the strict recommendations of the bishop, designed to conceal her identity from everyone:

«“When people ask you your name, you will answer: My name is Maria das Dores.” “Yes, Mother Directress.” “When you are asked what parts you are from, you will answer: From around Lisbon.” “Yes, Mother Directress.” “You will never say anything to anyone regarding the events at Fatima. You will not ask anything. You will not answer anything.” “Yes, Mother Directress.” “You will not go on walks with the other girls, and you will not say why you do not go. Do you understand?” “Yes, Mother Directress.”»³²⁴

Having donned the uniform of the boarding students, Lucy began a life in which everything would be new for her, beginning with her name. Later on she would admit how painful it was for her to give up her baptismal name: «It very much afflicted me (she later said) that I could not be named Maria of Jesus rather than Maria das Dores (Maria of Sorrows), since I was already called Lucy of Jesus.»³²⁵ This borrowed name, which was not yet a religious name, was more than a symbol, it was the mark of the hard sacrifices demanded of her by the absolute silence she had promised on everything concerning Fatima. Although it was easy for her to keep silence regarding herself, to say nothing about Fatima, ever – this no doubt cost her much more. As for not knowing anything of what was going on there, or very little, gleaned now and then from the rare visits she received – this was a sorrowful trial for Lucy, which did not go away with time. Although she was happy in her new life as a boarding student, completely devoted to the life of prayer and study, nevertheless this double separation – from her family and from the blessed spot of the apparitions – was a cruel suffering for her during her stay at Vilar... in addition to a supernatural trial, the deprivation of spiritual consolations.

THE LETTERS OF MARIA DAS DORES

Today we have a direct and very moving testimony of Lucy’s life as a young

student. In 1979 a series of twenty-five of her letters written between 1921 and 1925 was published; they are almost all addressed to her mother. These letters are documents of the highest importance for us.³²⁶ They are especially important because they help us discover, through an incomparable firsthand view, what a simple, courageous, humble and modest soul Our Lady chose for Her messenger.

Without going too much into the news of her family which occupies her for the most part, we will nevertheless use these letters as a thread connecting our own account.

A SOLID AND PRACTICAL FORMATION

Four days after her arrival, Lucy already took up her pen to write to her mother and reassure her. By July 4, Lucy is concerned, and writes:

«My dear mother, I write you this letter because, right up until today I have not had any news from you. I have written to you and I still have not had a response... I am anxious to know how you are doing.

«My dear mother, do not worry, for I am doing quite well. My Sister-Professors are very good to me, and Mother Directress is very kind. She encourages me very much, which is what I need...»

At this point Lucy urgently requested news about each and every one of her relatives and friends.

She took up her pen again on July 17:

«My dear mother, I have received your letter and it is a great joy for me to know that you are in good health... But I was very sad to learn of the death of my cousin Teresa (one of Francisco and Jacinta's sisters). Let me know what illness she had, because she died very suddenly.

«I have already said some prayers for her and I have asked my companions to do the same. They all said they would, and the Sisters did too. My aunt must be very sad! Poor dear! She must be conformed to the will of God...

«I ask you to pray to Our Lady for me; so that She gives me a good memory to pursue my studies. Right now I am learning how to make the

responses at Mass, but for that, I have to be able to read Latin...»

When Lucy first entered Vilar, her handwriting was very inconsistent, with numerous spelling mistakes. She applied herself and rapidly made great progress. However, the education given at the college was much more practical than theoretical. The most varied subjects were taught there, and Lucy always retained a rather imprecise spelling. Later on, when she had to write down her recollections, only her great natural talent made up for her lack of literary formation.

On October 10, 1921, she wrote:

«My dear mother, I am more and more happy... My work is to be at study and in the work room. Here we learn everything, cooking, braid-work. Everything is useful...»

Lucy even learned how to type. But she excelled especially in sewing. She had a particular taste for embroidery, in which she developed a real mastery.³²⁷ Intelligent and clever, she quickly attained high honours. As we have said, it was to avoid revealing her real identity and for no other reason that she was not presented for examinations.³²⁸

MEANWHILE, AT FATIMA

By October 2, 1921, more than three months had gone by since Lucy had left Aljustrel. She had received no news of the Cova da Iria, and this silence weighed heavily on her. She dared to ask her mother about this discreetly, after first reminding her, somewhat clumsily, of the reasons for her reserve:

«The letters are read by the Mother Directress, and by the Sister who teaches us reading...³²⁹ Do many people continue to go there? Is it nice? Do the women of Valado continue to write?...»

This is all she permitted herself to say regarding the pilgrimage which was so close to her heart. Later on, she would confide that sometimes a frightful doubt tormented her. Here is Figueiredo's account of this recollection:

«It occurred to me that it was all over. *I felt a profound bitterness to see that the Most Holy Virgin would never be venerated there as She requested to*

be. I often thought of that, and this thought never left my mind, and it afflicted me.»The author continues: «But Lucy, always humble and submissive, murmured: “If all is finished, it is because Our Lord permits it so. For my part, I have done everything that Our Lady has inspired me to do and requested me to do. Everything.”»³³⁰

If Lucy’s ignorance concerning Fatima was not always as complete as has been claimed, we know nevertheless that the Directress of the college, Mother Magalhaes, had agreed to accept the seer only out of deference to Bishop da Silva, and was at the time hardly favourable to the apparitions of Fatima. She was also rigorous in applying the rule of absolute silence on this subject. «She watched carefully, so that no news of Fatima came into the house: visitors, letters, journals. Treating all her boarding students with equal kindness, she was somewhat cold to Lucy, or at least made sure that she was not given more consideration than the others.»³³¹

AN EVIDENT MODESTY

October 23, 1921: Bishop da Silva came to the college and Lucy «spent a moment with him». However, she said nothing to her mother about this conversation. Eager as always for news of Aljustrel, she concluded: «Do not forget to write me and tell me everything going on over there, all right?»

On December 18, 1921 she wrote:

«Finally, I cannot say anything about my coming over there. (Had she perhaps hoped to spend part of her Christmas vacation there?) As far as my studies go, I am still on the honour roll. Look how quickly Christmas is coming around! Are you going to kill the pig? I assure you that this gave me a little thought; I cannot forget how much work that makes before going to Mass!»

We deliberately quote this excerpt to show how natural the seer is, not to say banal and prosaic. Except for two or three passages where she permits herself to express a few counsels or remonstrances concerning her brother or sisters, all her letters are in this vein, which shows her extremely great modesty. We do not find a single line in which she tries to play herself up in any way. Nothing leads us to believe that she does not consider herself the most ordinary girl. No, it cannot be

said that the apparitions went to her head! And yet, in the recesses of her soul, she remembers them and from them still nourishes her life of piety! She is always ready to give a firm witness on this subject.

1922: FIRST ACCOUNT OF THE APPARITIONS

It was surely her confessor, Father Pereira Lopes, then a professor at the seminary of Porto³³², who asked Lucy to give this first account of the apparitions, which she drew up on January 5, 1922. Under the title, “The Events of 1917”, Lucy briefly describes the six apparitions of Our Lady. In spite of its stylistic errors and omissions, this account demonstrates, apart from its historical importance, the charming ingenuity of the seer, who concludes: «May I be excused for writing so badly, but I am unable to do better; I am still a student.»³³³

Let us recall here that it was also during this same year, 1922, that Lucy, so desirous of making known the messages received from Heaven, taught the two prayers of the Angel to one of her companions, without of course referring to the circumstances in which she had learned them.³³⁴

A PAINFUL LONELINESS

Since this is the best way of making her known, let us continue to glean some excerpts from the letters of our boarding student. On January 2, 1922, she wrote:

«It seems that Dona Filomena³³⁵ is going to leave this summer to be with you; it would be a great pleasure for me to go there with her; but if that is not possible, patience! I am resigned to the will of God. I would very much like to write to several ladies, especially the ladies of Valado and Dona Emilia, as well as those of Olival (with whom I stayed frequently), but this is not possible and you know the reason. If you will, recommend me to those who ask for news of me, and I forget none of those who are recommended to my prayers.»

On February 2, 1922, Lucy wrote to her mother again, always expressing the same affection, the same touching tenderness:

«It is already almost two months that I have had no news from over there, and every day I prayed to Our Lady so that you might send me some news. Are you feeling better? Since Caroline is at home, she must remember every morning to bring some milk to you in bed so that you will be strong enough to be waiting for me when I come.»

Maria Rosa sent some money to get a photograph of her daughter. But since the Directress was either too busy to drive Lucy into town, or absent, the affair went on for months.

«IN THE HANDS OF SHE WHO CAN DO EVERYTHING»

On April 16, 1922, Lucy wrote to her mother:

«I received your letter yesterday... I see that you are very worried about me. You should not be so worried, because I am quite well. If only you could see what good health I am in now! It also seems to me that you are somewhat wanting in confidence towards Our Lady. You can be sure that She protects me; I am in the hands of She who can do everything and that is why we must put all our confidence in Her. (There follows a long list of relatives or dear friends about whom she asked for news.) It would be my pleasure to write to them, but there is a reason why I cannot write to anyone, and you know what it is. Dona Filomena came on the fifteenth of this month, and she gave me more winter clothes and scissors. She told me the Capelinha had been burned.»³³⁶

THE TERRIBLE TRIAL OF SEPARATION

The letter of June 4, 1922, is a sad cry of alarm, which shows what anguish her concern for her relatives caused her:

«I no longer know what I must think: it is almost two months that I have not heard anything from over there. I do not know if you are living or dead. I have written two letters and still there is no answer... If they had been written to someone else, I could believe I had been forgotten. But the heart of a mother takes longer to forget her daughter. You cannot imagine how sad I feel when I see the Sister arrive at recreation time with letters for my

companions, and I have neither sad nor happy news to console me. Every day, I pray to my dear Heavenly Mother to give me some news of my family, but it seems that She no longer hears me. Imagine how sad I am...!»

As she informs her mother that the photograph will not arrive until later on (it still has not been done!), Lucy ends on a humorous note regarding herself:

«You will be astonished to see how portly I am. In the country you have never seen anyone so fat. You can almost compare me with our aunt from Leiria!»³³⁷

«*MY GREATEST SORROW...*»

On June 29, she congratulates her brother Manuel on his recent marriage. However, no doubt realizing his weakness, and fearing he might follow the bad example of his father, she dared to speak firmly to him, going straight to the point:

«I would also like to ask something of you. It is, that you never forget your duties towards your spouse and that you always go to Mass on Sunday; and, after Mass, go back to the house. Do not waste time in the cafés for this is the disgrace of many men, and you have seen and you know what this leads to.»³³⁸

Two months later, on September 12, it was for her sisters that she was concerned: Gloria and Caroline, after several disappointments, were still not married. Lucy did not think they were as serious as they ought to have been:

«*Here (she writes) I have always the same joy. My greatest sorrow is to know that my sisters do not realize the evils there are in life; they think only about boys, who seek only to deceive them!*

«*I am also sad not only that I cannot visit my family but also you know where...*

«God willing, before long you will have the pleasure of receiving my photographs, but pray to God that it not be the cause of my departure... You know why I speak this way. In the world, there are very intelligent people, and they jump to conclusions. I do not want to be put out into the street. I

cannot explain myself further.»

Lucy is always haunted by the same thought: to keep her identity secret, at any price! Without this, she thought, she risked being sent home immediately.

On November 27, 1922, she was full of joy:

«His Excellency, the bishop, has given me the following news: “I will come to see you soon...”» Lucy concludes the letter: «I would like to ask another favour of you: to make a communion for me, and to make a little visit to Our Lady in the Cova da Iria, to ask Her to remember me once again, and to thank Her for the graces I have received.»

However, by January 7, 1923, she had still not gone to Fatima:

«I do not know when I will come. I am waiting to be told when I can do that. I have only been told that I will be able to spend some time at home soon, but I don't know when.»

In the end, this trip to Fatima, which was continually put off, never took place at all. Lucy did not see the Cova da Iria again until 1946!

AUGUST 26, 1923: LUCY ENTERS THE “DAUGHTERS OF MARY”

It is now more than two years since the seer left Fatima. Although the separation was always very sad for her, she made great progress in her studies and her religious knowledge, as well as in her behaviour. This was not without some imperfections when she first entered college. «Maria of Sorrows (notes Canon Barthas) remained for a long time the little mountain maiden of Aljustrel. With her directors, she was simple but not naive. Sometimes her character came out in her relations with her companions: rather dry responses to questions, stubbornness, some rude manners. However, if she realized that she may have hurt somebody, she immediately grew very gentle and asked pardon.»³³⁹ In this regard, she corrected herself little by little. With time, the way she applied herself to all the tasks assigned her, and above all her profound humility gained her the esteem of her directors, and even of Mother Magalhaes. The latter recognized that her first impression of Lucy had been too hasty and completely changed her opinion of her.

«What was especially striking about her», notes Canon Barthas, continuing his account based on testimonies about Lucy, «was her calm and equilibrium, the way she always kept an even temper. There was nothing about her that smacked of the neurotic, or even the “nervous” or sentimental type.»³⁴⁰ One of her directors declared: «I only saw her weep once, and that was when she thought of her home town.»

The day of her entrance into the “Daughters of Mary”, where only the most exemplary students were admitted, Lucy received a signal grace. Later on she was to consider it one of the greatest graces given to her in her entire existence. Indeed, in the brief list of “principal dates” of her life, drawn up by her on May 13, 1936, undoubtedly at the request of her confessor, she makes this note: «August 26, 1923. She enters as a Daughter of Mary at Asilo de Vilar. It was the first time since 1917 that Our Lady appeared to her again.»³⁴¹ After a long account of the apparitions, written the same date, she is more explicit:

«After six years of real trials (since 1917), it was on this day, August 26, 1923, that Our Lady for the first time came back to visit me. This was when I entered the Daughters of Mary.

«She said that She agreed to be my true Heavenly Mother, since I had left my earthly mother for the love of Her. Again She recommended to me prayer and sacrifice for sinners, saying that a great number are damned because they have no one to pray and sacrifice for them.»³⁴²

Although she was completely successful in hiding from everybody the fact that she was the seer of Fatima, Lucy could not conceal her tender devotion towards her Heavenly Mother: «I did not have particular devotion towards the Most Holy Virgin (one of her directresses declared), but after meeting Maria of Sorrows I became very fervent towards the Mother of God.»³⁴³

After her reception in the group of Daughters of Mary, Lucy began helping the nuns in the formation of the young boarding students: thus she became monitor of the dormitory for the smallest ones, and since she was also in charge of supervising their recreations, once again she demonstrated her great talents as catechist. With charm she was able to relate all kinds of stories and accounts, and she loved to explain the Passion of Our Lord or the life of the Most Holy Virgin. Just as at Aljustrel, the children had a very special attraction to her. As for her companions, they appreciated her frankness and cheerfulness, because Maria

liked to laugh and joke. But it was surely her purity of soul, her interior peace and union with God which made her presence so pleasant.³⁴⁴

In spite of everything, she still suffered much because of the lack of news from Fatima. «Dona Filomena has not come for four months», she wrote on December 9, 1923. She did not complain about it, but it did cause her suffering. Here is another passage from a letter to her mother of March 19, 1924:

«I would like to ask a favour of you; ask the same thing of Caroline, Maria Julia and Gloria: say one “Hail Mary” for me when you go to the Cova da Iria, so that Our Lady grants me a certain grace. Write to me and tell me how Manuel (her brother) is behaving; as well as my brothers-in-law (Gloria and Caroline are now married), because I would like to know something about how my sisters are doing. For even though I have not written, *after Jesus and Mary, I love my family.*»

Far from being the mark of an imperfection, is not this strong attachment to her family demonstrated by Lucy in all her letters instead the sign of a great richness of heart? Because this tender affection towards her family does not flinch before sacrifices and is completely impregnated with supernatural charity, it places our seer in good company. We might recall the letters of Father de Foucauld, or those of Saint Théophane Vénard, which were so pleasing to Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, and precisely for the same reason!³⁴⁵

On April 13, 1924, after wishing her mother a happy Easter, «I hope you celebrate the feast very joyously, in the midst of the whole family.» She adds:

«As for me, I will spend the feast in the midst of my directresses and companions. It is true that I have many regrets, but patience! Let us offer this sacrifice to Our Lord in satisfaction for our sins and He will recompense us. Do not think, mother, that I am not doing well. I am very happy, I could not be better, but don't be surprised that I feel some nostalgia, because it is three years since I have been over there, and I have not seen any one in the family.»

It even seems that the project of a visit to Aljustrel was deliberately abandoned. This is why Lucy's mother decided to pay her a visit: twice Maria Rosa made this journey, but only twice. She wished – and how understandably! – that her daughter could write to her directly, without always going through the Superior...

Lucy wisely answered:

«I cannot do that, because that would be going against the will of His Grace, the bishop, and I must contrive in every way not to displease him, because I could never repay all the favours he has done for me.»

Full of gratitude and out of obedience, Lucy was able to stay faithful to all her promises, showing signs of a rare force of soul. She had succeeded so well in making it forgotten who she really was, that Mother Paiva, who succeeded Mother Magalhaes as Directress of the college, came to believe that perhaps Lucy herself had forgotten. One day, to reassure herself, Mother Paiva asked her:

«“Do you remember what took place at Fatima between Our Lady and you? Surely you have forgotten...” Then Lucy lowered her head, blushed violently and said: “Do I remember? Of course, I always remember it!”»³⁴⁶

Moreover, she had an opportunity to give a striking proof of it, that very same year.

THE CANONICAL PROCESS: JULY 8, 1924

The work of the diocesan canonical process in view of official recognition of the apparitions was slowly advancing. The process was opened on May 3, 1922, but it was only two years later that it proceeded to the interrogation of the seer. Thus the judges of the tribunal, named by Bishop da Silva, went under the strictest secrecy to Asilo de Vilar.³⁴⁷

Lucy responded with perfect clarity, thus leaving a precious document for the history of Fatima. Canon Formigao later explained the impression left on him by Lucy's deposition:

«Going over the verbal process will not fail to profoundly impress whoever reads it in good faith. Every response of the seer, every one of her declarations gives overwhelming evidence of the sincerity of her declarations, the truth of her deposition. She expresses herself with serenity, a calmness, a simplicity, such firmness and intimate conviction, and at the same time such great humility – as if dealing with questions which did not concern her – that her deposition leaves nothing to be desired. On every point imaginable, in no way is her deposition inferior to that of Saint

Bernadette Soubirous.»³⁴⁸

In response to a final question: «Are you quite certain that the Blessed Virgin really appeared to you?» Lucy responded by this firm and solemn declaration: «*I have the certitude that I saw Her and that I am not mistaken. Even if they were to kill me, nobody could make me say the contrary.*»³⁴⁹

“SHOULD I NOT HAVE SAID EVERYTHING?” Although Lucy had no doubt about the reality of the apparitions, Lucy was soon to be tormented by another doubt: the fear of having broken the oath taken over the Gospels. She had not said everything since, as we know, she made no reference to the themes of the great Secret, being content to reiterate her testimony concerning what she had already revealed in 1917.

Lucy explains it this way in her Memoirs:

«Whenever I was interrogated, I experienced an interior inspiration which directed me how to answer, without either failing in truth or revealing what should remain hidden for the time being. In this respect, I still have just this one doubt: *Should I not have said everything in the canonical inquiry?* But I have no scruples about having kept silence, because at that time I had as yet no realization of the importance of this particular interrogation. I regarded it, at the time, as being just like the many other interrogations to which I was accustomed. The only thing I thought strange was the order to take the oath. But as it was my confessor who told me to do so, and as I was swearing to the truth, I took the oath without any difficulty. *Little did I suspect at that moment that the devil would make the most of this, in order to torment me with endless scruples later on.* But, thank God, all that is over now.

«There was yet another reason which confirmed me in my conviction that I did well to remain silent. In the course of the canonical inquiry, one of the interrogators, Father Marques dos Santos, thought he could extend his questionnaire somewhat, and began therefore to ask more searching questions. Before answering, I looked inquisitively at my confessor. His Reverence saved me from my predicament, and answered on my behalf. He reminded the interrogator that he was exceeding his rights in this matter.»³⁵⁰

THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION

Lucy always maintained an extreme reserve on the secrets of her soul. She would communicate them only with misgivings, and when her role as messenger of the Blessed Virgin necessarily demanded it. This constant supernatural discretion, which made her jealously keep hidden the treasures of grace poured out into her soul, could create the risk of misleading us on the profundity of her union with God, and the generosity of her life of sacrifice.³⁵¹

We know however, that when she was at Asilo de Vilar, around 1923-1924, Lucy had a strong desire to enter Carmel. «At that time (Father Alonso writes) the recent canonization of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus³⁵² attracted many souls to Carmel, and Lucy was one of them.»³⁵³ Granted, she had read the Saint's autobiography, *The Story of A Soul*, with enthusiasm, and "the little way of spiritual childhood" pleased her a great deal. Yet there was undoubtedly something more to this call to a Carmelite vocation. Was it not her Heavenly Mother who had invited Lucy into Her Order? Was it not the same Heavenly Mother who appeared in the sky at the Cova da Iria on October 13, 1917, clothed with the habit of Carmel and holding the Holy Scapular in Her hand?

Timidly, Lucy opened her heart to her Superior, Mother Magalhaes. In a word, the latter discouraged her from entertaining such a desire: «You wouldn't be able to take such austerity. Choose a more simple rule.» This opinion, as well as the advice of her directors (Msgr. Pereira Lopes and the chaplain of the college, Dr. Manuel Ferreira da Silva), who were naturally inclined to the institute of the Dorotheans, convinced Lucy that there lay her vocation. Besides, did she not owe everything to this institute which had welcomed her?³⁵⁴ Let us admire the immense modesty and perfect purity of intention presupposed by such docility!

Barthas relates this significant anecdote about Lucy. One day, Lucy had said to Mother Magalhaes:

«"Mother, I would like to be a Dorothean Sister." "But you are so young, my daughter! And why do you want to be a Sister?" "To have more freedom to go to chapel." "But you are so young, you must wait." [In fact she was only seventeen.] Lucy was silent, obeyed, and waited more than a year. When she was eighteen, the Mother Superior said to her: "Are you still thinking of becoming a nun?" "I think of it all the time, I desire it, I want it!" "Well?" "I was told that I have to wait. I have waited."»³⁵⁵

LUCY'S CONFIRMATION: AUGUST 24, 1925. On August 24, Lucy received confirmation. The ceremony took place at Formigueira, which is the country home situated near Braga where Bishop da Silva generally went on vacation. Lucy's sponsor was her benefactor and friend, Dona Filomena Morais de Miranda.

Bishop da Silva, who had himself chosen the institute of the Dorothean Sisters for the formation of the seer, greatly rejoiced at her vocation. He gladly gave her permission to leave Porto for Tuy, where the novitiate of the congregation was located.

THE THANKSGIVING OF A "MISERABLE SINNER". The very next day, Lucy hastened to write to Canon Formigao, and tell him the good news. She felt unworthy of such a grace – she, such a miserable sinner – but she lets us see the habitual sentiments of her humble soul in this letter:

«I could never thank Your Reverence for all the acts of charity you have done for me. But I confide myself to my Heavenly Mother, so that one day She might repay Your Reverence and all the other charitable souls who have helped me, *this miserable sinner*, with so much tenderness and love.

«I hope to enter the Institute of Saint Dorothy in Spain at the end of October or early November. Because I am so unworthy of such a great grace, I ask Your Reverence to do me one more act of charity: to thank Jesus for me and ask of Him that I do the Divine Will in all things...

«May Your Reverence please excuse *this humble sinner* who will never forget you before Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and Mary Most Holy. Your Reverence, I am your most humble servant and respectfully ask your blessing.

Maria Lucia de Jesus Santos»³⁵⁶

Another letter, written to Bishop da Silva at the end of September or beginning of October, lets us see once again the perfection of this soul on the eve of her entrance into religious life. The bishop had told her of the death of a dear friend and asked her for prayers. Let us admire the generosity with which the seer responded to his request. She promises:

«If God preserves my life, every day for two months I will offer for that

soul the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, communion, the Rosary and the Way of the Cross. For the rest of my life, I will never forget to recommend her to God in my poor prayers.»

Having prayed much and asked others to pray³⁵⁷ for two of her nieces to be accepted at Asilo de Vilar, her heart overflowed with gratitude that they were accepted:

«I just received yet another favour from my Mother in Heaven, and I cannot fail to tell you about it... Your Most Reverend Excellency cannot imagine how profoundly grateful I am towards my dear Mother in Heaven, because She alone can so love *such a poor sinner like me.*»³⁵⁸

AT TUY, ENTRANCE INTO RELIGIOUS LIFE

The hour for “farewells” struck at the college on October 24. That morning, the Directress went down to the recreation room for a solemn breakfast. The little girls, who were all moved and in tears, said goodbye to Lucy, whose true identity was then revealed. Little gifts were exchanged and finally the girls separated.³⁵⁹

Accompanied by the Reverend Mother Provincial, Mother Monfalim,³⁶⁰ Lucy took the train to Tuy, an old city of Spanish Galicia, near the border. We have two documents of the highest interest regarding the arrival of our seer at the Provincial house. A few days after, probably before the end of October, Lucy gave a detailed account to her bishop, Msgr. da Silva, and her spiritual director at Vilar, Msgr. Pereira Lopes.³⁶¹

Let us follow first Lucy’s letter to her confessor. It is full of charming, childlike candour:

«I will respectfully tell Your Reverence about my trip and tell you how I am doing so far.

«From my departure at Asilo to the train station, I was accompanied by the Most Excellent Mother Directress (Mother Paiva). From the train station to Tuy, I was accompanied by the Most Reverend Mother Provincial. We had a very nice trip.»

HER WELCOME AND TOTAL CONSECRATION IN THE CHAPEL.

«As I entered the house, the Mother Provincial led me immediately to the chapel and asked me to consecrate myself entirely to Our Lord: “My Jesus! I give myself entirely to You. My Mother in Heaven, do Thou take care of me!”

«Right then tears of nostalgia and joy interrupted my prayer, because I had finally arrived at this place which I had desired so much. I wept for a moment. Then someone tapped me on the shoulder: “Come to dinner!” I went, and took my recreation with the professed Sisters.»

The next part of the letter calls for a short explanation. The rule of the Dorothean Sisters, modelled on the Society of Jesus, envisions two kinds of religious: Choir Sisters and Oblate Sisters, who do manual tasks. In a spirit of renunciation, Lucy chose to serve as an Oblate Sister.

A TORMENTED NIGHT: FROM THANKSGIVING... «The following day (October 25) out of obedience, I got up a bit late. However, I had not slept at all. During the night, I thought only of my happiness and the graces I had received without meriting anything, and how to be good so as to please Our Lord. I also thought of the innumerable favours I had received from His Most Holy Mother and I asked Her to help me always, for without Her help I am nothing.»

... TO TEMPTATION. «I ardently desired the hour of rising to come to be able to rise and speak to Jesus in the Tabernacle, because I felt great sadness at the thought that I would never go back to my embroidery work, which was so pretty, and which I did with such gusto, when it was for Our Lord.³⁶²

«It occurred to me that I had been very silly in wanting to be an Oblate Sister, because I would be occupied with the most humble tasks, and I would be like a maid for the other sisters. I felt sad; and in spite of all my efforts I could not repulse such thoughts. If I pictured myself before Our Lady, the same thoughts kept coming back and it even seemed that a person was there, speaking to me and saying: “Would you not please Our Lady more if you were still at Vilar, embroidering this golden veil which is for Her, rather than coming now to this house to do any old work?!”

«If I thought of the beautiful child who so entranced me³⁶³ – the mere thought of whom usually was enough for me to repulse the strongest temptation because immediately I would be entranced – this day it did no good, because I would think right away of the beautiful works I had done for Him. Finally, there was no way of repulsing such a temptation!

«I turned right away to Our Lady, and asked that the hour for going to Jesus arrive quickly. Then the time passed in an instant, and soon after I was in the chapel. But the temptation endured a long time. I looked at the Choir Sisters and their habit seemed beautiful to me; and I looked at the Oblate Sisters and felt an aversion to them. I desired the moment of communion to come, for now I hoped only in Jesus in the Host.»

THE COMFORTING EFFECT OF COMMUNION. «That moment came before long, and as soon as I approached the Holy Table I felt comforted. I received Jesus and told Him of the whole struggle I had suffered until that point. I then said to Him: “My Jesus, have compassion on me!”

«Then He deigned to speak to me interiorly, telling me that it would go very well if I imitated my Mother in Heaven, with joy. He told me: “Listen, My daughter, your most Holy Mother knew how to embroider very well, and for the love of Me, She abandoned Her school and came to do housework: She swept, weaved the linen of Her house, Hers and My own, and never embroidered again; She humbled Herself then, but is exalted now. And you, if you wish to be like Her, be happy and content now, and I will repay you one day.”

«After that I was tranquil and content: already I felt more and more blessed, for I was near Jesus and among those who were already His spouses. I no longer desired anything, except to remain there and not to leave.»

THE SACRIFICE OF A LONGWAIT?³⁶⁴ «But when God gives a consolation, He also asks for a sacrifice: already the Mother Provincial had told me that I would not remain there. I thought that as I left there, the same thing would happen to me that happened to many postulants: to have to wait a year and a half before entering the novitiate.³⁶⁵

«After breakfast, I went to the chapel, and as I thought of that, copious tears flowed. I said only: “My Jesus, may Your Will be done!” Then the Novice

Mistress called me and encouraged me: I had to be very good, and there would be no delay in entering the novitiate. Then I returned to the chapel, I recited a “Memorare” to Our Lady, for Her to grant me the favour of not having to wait long before beginning my postulancy.

«I had finished my prayer, when a Sister called for me to go and see the Mother Provincial. I went, and she told me straightaway that I had begun my postulancy on October 24 and that, if I were very good, it would end on April 24. Thus I would receive the habit at the first opportunity.

«It was yet another proof of the help and tender protection my Most Holy Mother gave me.»³⁶⁶

“TO BECOME A SAINT.” «... That same day [October 25, 1925], I travelled to Pontevedra, where I am today, in the company of Reverend Mother Magalhaes.³⁶⁷ I am happy; I desire only to become a saint, to give greater honour and glory to God for the salvation of sinners and to make reparation for my sins.»³⁶⁸

THE POSTULANCY AT PONTEVEDRA: OCTOBER 25, 1925 - JULY 20, 1926

The old and picturesque “Travesia de Isabella II” where Lucy arrived that Sunday evening, October 25, was renamed, very appropriately, “Sister Lucy Street”. As for the cell she occupied in the beautiful Dorothean convent – in fact it was the former abode of the Marquis of Riestra – it has since been turned into an oratory. These places are blessed, because, just as at the Cova da Iria, Valinhos, the Cabeço or Arneiro, Heaven visited the earth there. In fact, during her first stay at Pontevedra, which lasted until July 20, 1926,³⁶⁹ Lucy would once again become the witness of wonderful apparitions. After four years of formation and trials in the crucible of suffering, Our Lady was to fulfil Her promise towards her: «But you, Lucy... Jesus wishes to use you to make Me known and loved. He wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»³⁷⁰

She was ready for this, she even aspired to it, having only one more desire in her soul: «to become a saint... to obtain the salvation of sinners and make reparation for sins.» A few weeks after she wrote these lines, Our Lady came to reveal to her Her great design for the salvation of sinners in our century of perdition: the

Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays of the month.

APPENDIX - THE TESTIMONY OF MOTHER MAGALHAES

Mother Maria Das Dores Magalhaes, who was Directress at Asilo de Vilar until September 1922, was Lucy's Superior for more than a year: In 1932, she included, along with one of her letters to Bishop da Silva, «a paper» on which she stated the impression her boarding student made on her back then. Writing more than ten years after the events, Mother Magalhaes commits some errors on details. Moreover, her testimony is composed of a succession of notes, without any apparent order. However, her testimony takes on the greatest importance for us, because of its spontaneity. It alone would suffice to pulverize all the suspicions and calumnies of Father Dhanis regarding the seer:

AN EXEMPLARY SILENCE

«Lucy entered Asilo de Vilar at the age of eleven (sic), if I am not mistaken. (In fact she was fourteen.) I took Lucy in because I knew it was the will of His Excellency Bishop da Silva. I felt a great reluctance in receiving her, for I feared that people would find out she was staying there. Finally, she entered on the condition that she say nothing about what took place, and in spite of her young age, *she kept silence on everything* during the two and a half years she stayed with me.³⁷¹

«Lucy had also agreed beforehand that from now on, she would not be called Lucy, but Maria das Dores (Maria of Sorrows). And the little child never forgot the recommendation.

«She was also asked not to speak about the favours she had received from Our Lady, and she obeyed to the letter.»

UNCOMMON VIRTUES

«Although I had little or no belief in the apparitions, I noticed all the same that *she was not an ordinary child.*

«On numerous occasions the Sisters came to tell me that Lucy had something extraordinary with Our Lady [sic], because when she spoke of Her, she was always different from other people, and people noticed that *she had an extraordinary love for the Most Holy Virgin*. Her companions from Asilo often said that they never had a companion who could equal her in the charming narratives she always gave during recreation.

«As for obedience, she always distinguished herself because *she always did the more perfect thing, without resisting, and always with a good heart*. Many times her companions told me that Lucy always chose the less agreeable work for herself, leaving better tasks for others.

«And she did everything *with a ravishing simplicity*. One day, a lady came to Asilo. She had been sent by His Excellency the bishop. She was there to make a painting of Our Lady, such as Lucy had seen Her. I called her and locked her in a room with this lady. There they did their work.³⁷² I did not see the result, because I didn't ask to see it. *Lucy kept silence on everything* and nobody knew the slightest thing about it, neither the nuns nor her companions.

«I never asked Lucy what took place at Fatima, because such was Bishop da Silva's order. And that is why I could say nothing, or almost nothing. I will say only that her behaviour left no doubt about the extraordinary graces she had received from Heaven.

«When the boarding students would go out on walks, Lucy would always stay home. It was enough for me to tell her once. She always obeyed to the letter and never told anyone she had received this order, for whatever reason.

«*It was said to me hundreds of times [sic] that Lucy was very obedient and very humble. It was recognized that she had an extraordinary prudence.*

«Her companions often said that *none of the children were so pious* and that she was happiest in the chapel, so great was her piety. We never saw her seated there, but kneeling upright, her hands on the pew in front. Such was her posture; it was enchanting.»

Here, Mother Magalhaes relates how, through her prayer, Lucy obtained the signal grace of beginning her postulancy the very day of her arrival at Tuy.³⁷³ «It was an extraordinary grace, a favour granted to nobody else.»

«Right after, she went away to do her postulancy at Pontevedra, at the college. There she continued to be very edifying by a most exact obedience, a charming charity with her companions or the little girls, and especially by *her most striking virtue: the simplicity with which she practiced all the virtues.*

«I could relate other things, but I have completely forgotten about them since I had no intention of relating them. What I can say in the strictest truth is that Lucy had the good fortune of possessing in a very high degree *the virtues of charity, obedience and simplicity.*

«P.S. When she left for Pontevedra, there were only nineteen students. One day, I said to Lucy: “I would like you to ask Our Lady to send other students.” Before the end of the year, there were already forty-three! I pretended not to have noticed such a grace, but in the depths of my heart I felt something extraordinary there. And since that time, there has always been an abundance of children. All the debts have been paid, and there were many.»³⁷⁴

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION: A letter from Mother Magalhaes to Bishop da Silva on December 29, 1925 gives us her judgment on our seer after her entrance into the postulancy. In a subsequent appendix we will quote this testimony, the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated for the history of Fatima.³⁷⁵

SECTION III: Reparation, a secret of mercy for sinners.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT PROMISE OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY AT PONTEVEDRA (1925 - 1926)

«To whomever embraces this devotion I promise salvation.» An admirable, stupefying promise made on June 13, 1917!... The promise, however, still leaves us in a state of doubt. Jacinta, by a special grace, felt her heart consumed by an ardent love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But we? We are cold, or our fervour is so short-lived! Could we ever know if we had sufficient devotion so that Our Lady would be bound to keep Her promise to us?

It is here that we are wonderstruck by the limitless Divine Mercy, and the profoundly Catholic character of the revelations of Fatima. In the whole message, there is not an ounce of Protestant subjectivism! Here, Heaven goes to the limits of condescension, and the most sublime oracles («God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart») are exchanged, translated into very small requests, clear and precise requests, easy requests which leave no room for doubt. Everyone can know if he has accomplished them or not. A “little devotion” practiced with a good heart is enough to procure infallibly for us the grace – *ex opere operato*, so to speak – as with the sacraments; and what a grace – the grace of eternal salvation! Giving careful study to such a magnificent promise is worth the effort. It is the fulfilment, the perfect expression of this first part of the great Secret, which is entirely concerned with the salvation of souls.

FROM FATIMA TO PONTEVEDRA: THE FULFILMENT OF THE SECRET. In describing the apparitions and explaining the message of Pontevedra, we will therefore do no more than comment on the words pronounced by Our Lady on July 13, 1917. They are concise, but so rich in meaning:

«... If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved... I will come to ask for... the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of the month.»

Here then is the first “Secret of Mary” which we must discover and understand: it is a sure and easy way of tearing souls away from the danger of hell: first our own, then those of our neighbours, and even the souls of the greatest sinners, for

the mercy and power of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are without limits.

I. PONTEVEDRA: THE APPARITIONS AND THE MESSAGE³⁷⁶

DECEMBER 10, 1925: THE APPARITION OF THE CHILD JESUS AND OUR LADY

On the evening of Thursday, December 10, after supper, the young postulant Lucy – who was only eighteen years old – returned to her cell. There she was visited by Our Lady and the Child Jesus. Let us listen to her account (written in the third person):³⁷⁷

«On December 10, 1925, the Most Holy Virgin appeared to her, and by Her side, elevated on a luminous cloud, was the Child Jesus. The Most Holy Virgin rested Her hand on her shoulder, and as She did so, She showed her a heart encircled by thorns, which She was holding in Her other hand.

«At the same time, the Child said: ***“Have compassion on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother, covered with thorns, with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them.”***

«Then the Most Holy Virgin said: ***“Look My daughter, at My Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce Me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console Me and announce in My name that I promise to assist at the moment of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep Me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to Me.”***»³⁷⁸

What a touching scene, and yet so simple, described with the sobriety of the Gospel itself! What a charming dialogue, in which the Child Jesus and His

Mother take turns speaking – He to plead Her cause, while She makes Her requests... to lead us back to Him.

As usual, the seer totally effaces herself here, not telling us a word about her own feelings. Is this not the surest mark of authenticity, which gives her account all its freshness? She is there to see, to listen, and to relate what happened, and nothing more.

Yet, what intimacy between the Blessed Virgin and Her messenger! Like St. Catherine Labouré, she received that day the privilege of being touched by Our Lady in a solemn and affectionate gesture, just as when a mother wants to give a child a confidential mission. The Blessed Virgin placed Her hand on Lucy's shoulder, giving her to contemplate Our Lady's most sorrowful Heart, and make It known to others.

Finally, the tone is the same as in the apparitions of 1917: what conciseness in the words of the great promise! It is the same conciseness that is found in the Secret of July 13, where a single word could not be suppressed without seriously damaging the sequence of thought. This too is a solid mark of authenticity.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE MESSAGE

How did Lucy go about making Heaven's requests known? We know that immediately she told everything to her superior, Mother Magalhaes, who had been completely won over to the cause of Fatima and now had a sincere respect for the seer. She herself was ready to obey the requests of Heaven. Lucy also informed the confessor of the house, Don Lino Garcia: «The latter (she recalls) ordered me to write down everything concerning [this revelation] and to keep these writings, which might be needed.»³⁷⁹ But he continued to wait.

Lucy wrote a detailed account of the event for her confessor from Asilo de Vilar, Msgr. Pereira Lopes. Unfortunately this letter was lost, and we only know of its existence because it is referred to in a later letter. On December 29, Mother Magalhaes informed Bishop da Silva of what had happened, but without being very precise.³⁸⁰

At this point Lucy finally received the response of Msgr. Pereira Lopes. He expressed reservations, asked questions, and advised her to wait. A few days

later, on February 15, Lucy answered him, giving him a detailed account of events. Fortunately, this extremely important letter has been preserved for us.³⁸¹ This precious text we will follow step by step, adding our own subtitles and comments.

A PAINFUL WAIT

«Most Reverend Father,

«I would like to thank you very respectfully for the kind letter you were so good as to write to me.

«When I received it and realized that I still could not fulfil the desires of the Blessed Virgin, I felt a little sad. But I realized right away that the Blessed Virgin desired that I obey you.

«That put me at rest, and the following day, when I received Jesus in Communion, I read Him your letter and I said to Him: “O my Jesus! With Your grace, with prayer, mortification and confidence, I will do everything obedience permits me and You inspire me; the rest You must do Yourself.”

«I remained like that until February 15. Those days were a continued inner mortification for me. I wondered if it had been a dream; but I knew it was not: I was certain that it was real! But still I asked myself how Our Lord could have deigned to appear again to me, who had responded so badly to the graces I had received!

«The day I was supposed to go to confession was approaching, and I didn’t have permission to say anything!³⁸² I wanted to tell my Mother Superior. But during the day my occupations would not permit me, and in the evening I suffered from headaches. Then, fearing to commit a fault against charity I thought: “This will be for tomorrow; I offer You this sacrifice, my dear Mother.” One day after another went by this way, until today.

«On the 15th, I was very busy with my work, and I was hardly thinking of that [the apparition of last December 10] at all. I was going to empty a garbage can outside the garden.»

THE ACCOUNT OF A CHARMING PRELUDE (NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER, 1925)

«At the same place, a few months before, I had encountered a child, whom I asked if he knew the Hail Mary. He had answered “Yes”, and I had asked him to say it to me, to hear him say it. At the end of three Hail Marys, I asked him to say it alone. Since he kept silence and seemed unable to say it alone, I asked him if he knew the church of Saint Mary. He said yes. Then I told him to go there every day and say this prayer: “O my Heavenly Mother, give me Your Child Jesus!” I taught him this prayer, and I went away.»

Here, by force of events, Lucy is obliged to speak about herself a little, and her rare confidences reveal to us something of her marvellous soul.³⁸³ Near the portal of the garden, she encounters a child. Immediately it occurs to her to talk to him about the Virgin Mary, to teach him to pray. Then she asks him to recite a Hail Mary... for the joy of hearing it. Since he would not say it alone, she recites it with him three times, according to the ancient practice of the three Hail Marys in honour of Our Lady.

Since the child never seemed willing to recite the Hail Mary alone, our catechist, who did not want to lose this opportunity of fulfilling her mission of making Our Lady known and loved, suggested another idea: she invited him to visit St. Mary's Church every day. In fact, the basilica of “St. Mary Major's” is quite near the house of the Dorothean Sisters. Was it shortly before or after the apparition of the Child Jesus, on December 10? We do not know. In any case, the little postulant taught the child this beautiful and short prayer which was surely her own as well, her most frequent and fervent prayer of this Advent of 1925: “O my Mother in Heaven, give me Your Child Jesus.” And she went away.

FEBRUARY 15, 1926: A NEW APPARITION OF THE CHILD JESUS

Lucy's moving account, which we are quoting at length, continues:

«So, on February 15, coming back as usual (to empty a garbage can outside the garden), I found a child there who seemed to be the same one as before, and I asked him: “Did you ask our Heavenly Mother for the Child Jesus?” The child turned to me and said: “And you, have you revealed to the world

what the Heavenly Mother asked you?” And, having said that, he turned into a resplendent child.

«Then recognizing that it was Jesus, I said to Him:

– “My Jesus! You know what my confessor said to me in the letter I read You. He said that this vision had to be repeated, there had to be facts permitting us to believe it, and that the Mother Superior alone could not spread this devotion.”

– ***“It is true that the Mother Superior alone can do nothing, but with My grace, she can do anything. It is enough that your confessor gives you permission, and that your superior announce this for it to be believed by the people, even if they do not know who it was revealed to.”***

– “But my confessor said in his letter that this devotion already exists in the world, because many souls receive You every first Saturday of the month, in honour of Our Lady and the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.”

– ***“It is true, My daughter, that many souls begin, but few persevere to the very end, and those who persevere do it to receive the graces promised. The souls who make the five First Saturdays with fervour and to make reparation to the Heart of your Heavenly Mother, please Me more than those who make fifteen, but are lukewarm and indifferent.”***

– “My Jesus! Many souls find it difficult to confess on Saturday. Will You allow a confession within eight days to be valid?”

– ***“Yes. It can even be made later on, provided that the souls are in the state of grace when they receive Me on the first Saturday, and that they had the intention of making reparation to the Sacred Heart of Mary.”***

– “My Jesus! And those who forget to form this intention?”

– ***“They can form it at the next confession, taking advantage of their first opportunity to go to confession.”***

«Right after that He disappeared, without me finding out anything more about Heaven’s desires, up to the present.»³⁸⁴

Here again, the internal criticism of this text excludes all reductionist explanations based on autosuggestion or the inventions of a disturbed mind. The facts reported – so charmingly! – are too clear, simple and supernatural to be the invention of a diseased soul. At the same time, they are too bewildering, surprising even at first glance, to be the work of any theologian. Who could have invented such an account from scratch?

In the first place, our seer is emptying the garbage cans of the monastery every day, for months. And she is happy. She does not seem disturbed by the humiliating circumstances of the apparition. To remind her of its great designs over the world and the salvation of souls, Heaven chose precisely the moment when its messenger was occupied in a very humble and abject little chore. Note well: a proud person, a mythomaniac deceived by illusory apparitions would have imagined extraordinary or at least uncommon circumstances, but never these. She would have been afraid of appearing ridiculous and not being believed. As for herself, Lucy relates the facts in all simplicity just as they took place, without being astonished that the Divine Child, born in a stable, chose this humble circumstance to manifest Himself.

It now remains for us to explain the meaning and significance of the message of Pontevedra, which although it remains only the complement – or rather the fulfilment of the message of Fatima – takes on the most singular importance.

II. THE GREAT PROMISE AND ITS CONDITIONS

The most astonishing thing about Pontevedra, of course, is the incomparable promise made by Our Lady: «**To all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months...**» fulfil all the conditions requested, «**I promise to assist them at the hour of death with all the graces necessary for the salvation of their soul.**» With boundless generosity, the Blessed Virgin promises here the grace of graces, the most sublime of all graces, that of final perseverance. This grace cannot be merited even by an entire life of sanctity spent in prayer and sacrifice, for it is always a purely gratuitous gift of the divine mercy. And the promise is without any exclusion, limitation, or restriction: «To all those who..., I promise.»

The disproportion between «the little devotion» requested, and the immense grace attached to it, reveals to us first of all and especially the quasi-infinite

power of intercession granted to the Blessed Virgin Mary for the salvation of all souls. «The great promise (Father Alonso writes) is nothing less than a new manifestation of this love of complacency which the Holy Trinity has for the Blessed Virgin. For those who understand such a thing, it is easy to admit that such wonderful promises can be attached to such humble practices. Such souls accept the promise with filial love, and a simple heart full of confidence in the Blessed Virgin Mary.»³⁸⁵

In short, we can therefore say in all truth that the first fruit of the Communion of Reparation is the salvation of the one practicing it. Let us place no limits on the divine mercy, but keep to the letter of the Blessed Virgin Mary's promise: whoever fulfils all the conditions set down can be sure of obtaining at the moment of death at least – and this even after miserable lapses back into a state of grave sin – the graces necessary to obtain the pardon of God, and to be preserved from eternal chastisement.

As we shall see, however, there is much more in this promise, for the missionary spirit is everywhere present in the spirituality of Fatima. The devotion of reparation is also recommended to us as a means of converting sinners in the greatest danger of being lost, and as a most efficacious means of intercession for obtaining the peace of the world from the Immaculate Heart of Mary.³⁸⁶

If Our Lady wished to attach such abundant fruits to the practice of this «little devotion», is it not to gain our attention more surely and move our heart so that we can practice it, and get others around us to practice it wherever we can? For this purpose it is important to be familiar with the conditions laid down, and have a precise knowledge of them.

Since 1925, Sister Lucy has never ceased repeating them, and always in the same terms. There are five conditions, to which is added a sixth, which concerns the general intention in which the other acts requested must be done.

1. THE FIRST SATURDAY OF FIVE CONSECUTIVE MONTHS

«All those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months...» This first requirement of Heaven contains nothing arbitrary nor even anything absolutely new. It fits into the immemorial tradition of Catholic piety, which having devoted Fridays to the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ and

honouring of His Sacred Heart, finds it very natural to devote Saturdays to His Most Holy Mother. Such is the venerable tradition which motivated the choice of Saturday.

But this is not saying enough: if we look closely, the great request of Pontevedra appears as the happy culmination of a whole movement of devotion. It began spontaneously, then it was encouraged and codified by Rome, and it seems to be nothing less than the providential preparation for what was to come later.

THE FIFTEEN SATURDAYS IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY. «For a long time, members of the various Rosary confraternities had the custom of devoting fifteen consecutive Saturdays to the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, before this feast or some other time of the year. On each of these Saturdays, they approached the sacraments and performed pious exercises in honour of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.» In 1889, Leo XIII granted to all the faithful a plenary indulgence for one of these fifteen consecutive Saturdays. In 1892, «he also granted those who were legitimately impeded on Saturday the faculty of performing this pious exercise on Sundays, without losing the indulgences.»³⁸⁷

THE TWELVE FIRST SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH. With Saint Pius X, the devotion of *the first Saturdays of the month* is officially approved: «All the faithful who, on the first Saturday or first Sunday of twelve consecutive months, devote some time to vocal or mental prayer in honour of the Immaculate Virgin in Her conception gain, on each of these days, a plenary indulgence. Conditions: confession, communion, and prayers for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.»³⁸⁸

THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION ON THE FIRST SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH. Finally, on June 13, 1912, Saint Pius X granted new indulgences to practices which almost exactly foreshadow the requests of Pontevedra: «To promote the piety of the faithful towards Immaculate Mary, Mother of God, and to make reparation for the outrages done to Her holy Name and Her privileges by impious men, Pius X granted, for the first Saturday of each month, a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory. Conditions: confession, communion, prayers for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff and pious practices in the spirit of reparation in honour of the Immaculate Virgin.»³⁸⁹ Five years later, to the day, after this thirteenth of June, 1912, there took place at Fatima the great manifestation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, «surrounded

with thorns which seemed to pierce It». Sister Lucy was to say later on: «We understood that it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, outraged by the sins of humanity, which demanded reparation.»³⁹⁰

On November 13, 1920, Pope Benedict XV granted new indulgences to this same practice when accomplished on the first Saturday of eight consecutive months.³⁹¹

A TRADITIONAL DEVOTION... How wonderful it is to see Heaven content itself with crowning a great movement of Catholic piety, doing nothing more than giving precision to the decisions of a Pope, and what a Pope, Saint Pius XI! In the same way, the Blessed Virgin had come to Lourdes to confirm the infallible declarations of Pope Pius IX.

Let us also say this right now: in requesting the Pope to solemnly approve the devotion of reparation revealed at Pontevedra, Our Lady was not really asking for anything impossible. Providence had prepared everything so well that in 1925-1926, this devotion was right in line with a series of papal decisions giving the forerunners and “pre-figures” of the First Saturday devotion.

... AND YET A VERY NEW DEVOTION. What new elements, however, in this message of Pontevedra! And first of all, in the concession of excessive faculties which only Heaven can take the liberty of granting: on December 10, the Virgin Mary no longer requires fifteen, twelve, or even eight Saturdays to be devoted to Her. She knows our inconstancy, and asks for only five Saturdays – as many as the decades on our Rosary.

Then, above all, the promise joined with it has increased so dramatically: no longer is it a question of indulgences (that is, the remission of punishment for sins already pardoned), but a much more signal grace, the assurance of receiving at the moment of death «all the graces necessary for salvation». A more wonderful promise could hardly be conceived, for it concerns success or failure in «the most important business, our only business: the great affair of our eternal salvation».³⁹²

2. *CONFESSION*

We have seen that it is not required that the confession be made on the first

Saturday itself. If, due to any necessity, it must be anticipated even beyond eight days, there must at least be a monthly confession. However, it is certain that, as far as possible, it is preferable that the confession be made on a day close to the first Saturday.

The thought of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary must equally be present. In this way, notes Father Alonso, «the soul adds to the principal motive of sorrow for our sins – which will always be that sin is an offence against God, Who has redeemed us in Christ – another motive for sorrow, which will undoubtedly exercise a beneficial influence: sorrow for the offence given to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of the Virgin Mary.»³⁹³

3. THE COMMUNION OF REPARATION ON THE FIRST SATURDAYS

The Communion of reparation, of course, is the most important act of the devotion of reparation. All the other acts centre around it. To understand its meaning and significance, it must be considered in relation with the miraculous Communion of autumn 1916; already this communion was completely oriented to the idea of reparation,³⁹⁴ thanks to the words of the Angel. The Communion of reparation must also be considered in relation to the Communion on the nine First Fridays of the month, requested by the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial.

Someone might object: to receive Communion on the first Saturday of five consecutive months is almost impossible for many of the faithful, who have no Mass in their parish on that day... Such is the question Father Gonçalves, Lucy's confessor, put to her in a letter of May 29, 1930:

«If one cannot fulfil all the conditions on a Saturday, can it be done on Sunday? People in the country, for example, will not be able very often, because they live quite far away...»³⁹⁵

Our Lord gave the answer to Sister Lucy during the night of May 29-30, 1930: «*The practice of this devotion will be equally acceptable on the Sunday following the first Saturday when My priests, for a just cause, allow it to souls.*»³⁹⁶ Thus not only the Communion, but also the recitation of the Rosary and meditation on the mysteries can be transferred to Sunday, for just motives of which priests are left the judges. It is easy to ask for this permission in confession. Note once again the Catholic, ecclesial character of the message of

Fatima. It is to His priests, and not to the individual conscience, that Jesus gives the responsibility of granting this additional concession.

After so many concessions, who could still claim that he was unable to fulfil the requests of the Virgin Mary?

4. RECITATION OF THE ROSARY

In each of the six apparitions of 1917, Our Lady requested people to recite the Rosary every day. Since it is a question of repairing for offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, what other vocal prayer could be more pleasing to Her?³⁹⁷

5. THE FIFTEEN MINUTE MEDITATION ON THE FIFTEEN MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

In addition to the recitation of the Rosary, Our Lady requests fifteen minutes of meditation on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. This does not mean, of course, that a quarter of an hour is required for each mystery! Just one quarter of an hour is required for all! Neither is it indispensable to meditate each month on the fifteen mysteries. Lucy writes to Father Gonçalves: «To keep Our Lady company for fifteen minutes, while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary.» To her mother, Maria Rosa, Lucy wrote essentially the same thing on July 24, 1927, suggesting only a meditation on some of the mysteries, left to free choice:

«Mother, I would also like you to give me the consolation of adopting a devotion which I know to be very agreeable to God, and which our dear Mother in Heaven has requested. As soon as I learned of it, I desired to adopt it, and see the whole world practice it.

«I hope therefore, Mother, that you will answer me by saying that you will practice it, and also try to get everyone else over there to practice it. You could not give me a greater consolation.

«It consists simply in doing what is written on this little image. The confession can be done another day, other than Saturday. The fifteen minutes (of meditation) might, I think, give you some trouble, but it is quite easy. Who would have difficulty thinking about the mysteries of the

Rosary? To think about the Annunciation of the Angel to Mary and the humility of our dear Mother, who seeing Herself so exalted, calls Herself the Handmaid (of the Lord); about the Passion of Jesus, Who suffered so much for our love; and about our Most Holy Mother near to Jesus on Calvary? Who could not spend fifteen minutes in these holy thoughts, before the most tender of mothers?

«Goodbye, dear mother. Console in this way our Mother in Heaven, and try to get many others to console Her in the same manner. In this way you will give myself also an unimaginable joy...

«Your most devoted daughter, who kisses your hand.»³⁹⁸

In this beautiful letter, Sister Lucy insists on the sixth condition, which is the principal one: each of these devotions must be accomplished «in the spirit of reparation», towards the Immaculate Heart of Mary: «console in this way our Mother in Heaven...», she wrote.

6. THE INTENTION OF MAKING REPARATION: «YOU, AT LEAST, TRY TO CONSOLE ME.»

Without this general intention, without this will of love which desires to make reparation to Our Lady to console Her, all these external practices are nothing, and are worth nothing. This is clear.

The practice of the Communion of reparation must be attentive and fervent. Our Lord explained this to Sister Lucy in His apparition of February 15, 1926: «It is true, My daughter, that many souls begin (the practice of the fifteen Saturdays), but few persevere to the end, and those who persevere do it to receive the graces promised for it. Souls that make the five first Saturdays *with fervour and to make reparation to the Heart of your Mother in Heaven* please Me more than the tepid and indifferent who make the fifteen...»³⁹⁹ Our Lady asks so little, but precisely so that we might apply ourselves to it from the heart. This does not mean that it will always be with much sensible fervour, according to the great maxim of spirituality: “To will to love is to love.”

The brief words of the Child Jesus and Our Lady on December 10, 1925, say it all. They suffice to make us understand the true spirit of this devotion of

reparation:

«Look, My daughter, at My Heart surrounded by thorns, with which ungrateful men pierce Me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude... without there being anyone to make an act of reparation to remove them... You, at least, try to console Me.»

This image, which is so expressive, says it all: the blasphemies and ingratitude of sinners are like so many cruel thorns, which only we can remove by our acts of love and reparation. For love, or «compassion», is the soul of all these practices. It is a question of consoling the Immaculate Heart of «the tenderest of mothers», which is so outraged.

Lucy had understood this perfectly at that very moment. The end of her letter to Msgr. Pereira Lopes, where she describes the apparition of the Child Jesus on February 15, 1926, is eloquent witness to this fact:

«Immediately after, He disappeared without my learning anything more of the desires of Heaven until now.

«And as for my own desires (she continues) may a flame of divine love be lighted in souls so that, being sustained in this love, they might really console the Sacred Heart of Mary. I have at least the desire to console a great deal my dear Mother in Heaven, in suffering much for Her love.»⁴⁰⁰

The originality of this message must be stressed.⁴⁰¹ For here there is no question, at least essentially, of consoling the Blessed Virgin by having compassion on Her Heart pierced by the sufferings of Her Son. To be sure, the message of Fatima presupposes this aspect of Catholic piety, which is already traditional. On October 13, 1917, Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows appeared in the sky to the three shepherds.⁴⁰² However, the most precise meaning of the reparatory devotion requested at Pontevedra consists not so much in meditation on the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary as in considering the offences which the Immaculate Heart of Mary now receives from ungrateful men and blasphemers who reject Her maternal mediation and scorn Her divine prerogatives. All these are so many thorns which must be taken from Her Heart by loving practices of reparation to console Her, and also to obtain pardon for the souls who have had the audacity to offend Her so gravely.

Nothing could better help us understand the true spirit of the reparation requested by Our Lady of Fatima than the account of an important revelation Sister Lucy was favoured with on May 29, 1930.

III. THE SPIRIT OF THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION: THE REVELATION OF MAY 29, 1930

Sister Lucy at the time was at Tuy. Her confessor, Father Gonçalves, had given her a series of questions in writing. Here, let us retain only the fourth one: «Why five Saturdays (he asked) and not nine, or seven, in honour of the sorrows of Our Lady?»⁴⁰³ That same evening, the seer implored Our Lord to inspire her with an answer to these questions. A few days later, she passed the following to her confessor.⁴⁰⁴

«While I was in the chapel with Our Lord part of the night of May 29-30, 1930 [we know that it was her habit to make a holy hour from eleven in the evening to midnight, especially on Thursday evenings, according to the requests of the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial] and speaking to Our Lord about questions four and five, I suddenly felt myself more intimately possessed by the Divine Presence and, if I am not mistaken⁴⁰⁵, this is what was revealed to me:

«My daughter, the reason is simple. There are five types of offences and blasphemies committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

- 1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception.***
- 2. Blasphemies against Her Virginity.***
- 3. Blasphemies against Her Divine Maternity, in refusing at the same time to recognize Her as the Mother of men.***
- 4. The blasphemies of those who publicly seek to sow in the hearts of children indifference or scorn, or even hatred of this Immaculate Mother.***
- 5. The offences of those who outrage Her directly in Her holy images.***

«Here, My daughter, is the reason why the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Me to ask for this little act of reparation...»⁴⁰⁶

THE THORNS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Here let us follow Father Alonso, for in his study on the message of Pontevedra, he makes a long and useful commentary on the five offences against the Immaculate Heart of Mary enumerated by Our Lord.

THE BLASPHEMIES OF HERETICS, SCHISMATICS AND IMPIOUS MEN. Blinded by a deceitful ecumenism, we have had a tendency since 1962 to forget that there is an obvious truth recalled here by the Message of Fatima: those who obstinately and with full knowledge openly deny the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin Mary, commit the most odious blasphemies in Her regard.

First blasphemy: against the Immaculate Conception. Father Alonso asks: who are those who might commit this offence against the Immaculate Heart of Mary? The answer leaves no doubt: «In the first place and in general the protestant sects who refuse to receive the dogma defined by Pius IX and who have continued to maintain that the Blessed Virgin was conceived with the stain of original sin and even personal sins. The same can be said of the (dissident) Eastern Christians, since, in spite of their great Marian devotion, they too refuse this dogma.»⁴⁰⁷

Although the Orthodox admit it, the majority of protestants also reject the perfect and perpetual virginity of Mary «before, during and after giving birth».

Although they theoretically accept the Divine Maternity of Mary defined at the Council of Ephesus, they refuse to recognize Her as the Mother of men in the Catholic sense, which implies Her co-redemption and Her role as Mediatrix of grace.

The fourth blasphemy concerns the perversion of children in whom enemies of Our Lady strive to inculcate indifference, scorn or even hatred for the Immaculate Virgin, and the fifth one, by which they outrage Her in Her holy images, are only the logical consequence of the first three, and often go together with them. Iconoclasm, or at least the obstinate rejection of Catholic theology on the holy images, is a long way from having disappeared.

In short, for three and a half centuries the Counter-Church has been waging an unceasing and furious struggle against the Immaculate Virgin, against Her cult, against Her reign in hearts and over all societies. Following in the footsteps of

protestantism, and coming after Jansenism and its cold disdain for true devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, the rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the modernism of the twentieth, continue to attack Marian doctrine and devotion, and just as scornfully and perfidiously. Finally, it is common knowledge how Bolshevik communism attempted in every possible way to destroy the profound veneration for the Mother of God, anchored in the soul of the Russian people. The holy icons had to disappear, being either destroyed or hidden... and they still await a happier day.

THE BLASPHEMIES OF REBELLIOUS AND UNGRATEFUL CHILDREN.

But there is something graver, more serious by far than all the offences of heretics, schismatics, apostates and ungodly men. It is the blasphemies of the Church's own children against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. With the passing of time, the message of Pontevedra seems astonishingly prophetic.

Father Richard, leader of the Blue Army in France, and who could hardly be suspected of an abusive pessimism, remarks on this subject: «Who could have imagined fifty years ago that these five great offences against Mary would spread within the clergy of the Catholic Church herself, and that a great number of baptized and catechized children in our parishes would not even know any longer how to say the “Hail Mary”.»⁴⁰⁸ Father Alonso was forced to make similar remarks.

This situation has become so prevalent today that all commentary is superfluous. There are certain theologians, certain priests, certain bishops who do have the five blasphemies on their conscience. There are not just a few exceptional cases, but hundreds and perhaps even thousands. It is not enough to make an observation of this fact. We must discover the causes of it and explain how we arrived at this point. Father Alonso at least described the event with exactitude: *The great «Marian era» inaugurated in 1854 by the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, he ventures to write, *closed with the Second Vatican Council.*⁴⁰⁹ But how did this come about? And why this alarming decline in Marian devotion, which was still in full bloom at the death of Pius XII? This is what we will have to examine later on, in the context of the Third Secret.

However, let us remark right now that the first element in the message of Fatima is faith – precise, dogmatic faith. True devotion to the Blessed Virgin always and necessarily presupposes faith in Her privileges and prerogatives infallibly defined by the Pope, or taught by the ordinary magisterium and unanimously

believed for centuries by the faithful. It is also true that the gravest sins against the Most Holy Virgin are first of all sins against faith. This important lesson must be kept in mind.

THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION: A SECRET OF MERCY FOR SINNERS

After enumerating the five blasphemies which gravely offend His Most Holy Mother, Our Lord gave Sister Lucy the decisive explanation which allows us to penetrate into the secret of Her Immaculate Heart, which overflows with mercy for all sinners, even those who scorn and outrage Her:

«See, My daughter, the motive for which the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Me to ask for this little reparation, and in consideration of it, to move My mercy to pardon souls who have had the misfortune of offending Her. As for you, always seek by your prayers and sacrifices to move My mercy to pity for these poor souls.»⁴¹⁰

“THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Here we have one of the principal themes of the message of Fatima: since God has decided to manifest more and more His great design of love, which is to grant all graces to men through the mediation of the Immaculate Virgin, it seems that their refusal to submit with docility to what God wills is the fault which most gravely wounds His Heart, and for which He no longer finds in Himself any inclination to pardon them. This sin seems unforgivable, because for Our Saviour there is no crime more unpardonable than to despise His Most Holy Mother and to outrage Her Immaculate Heart, which is the Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. This is committing «the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will not be forgiven in this world or in the next.»⁴¹¹

Soon, in 1929, in the apparition of Tuy which is the final fulfilment of Fatima, Our Lady will conclude the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Trinity with these striking words: «*So many are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against Me that I come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray.*» These words are so strong that several translators took the liberty of diluting their meaning.⁴¹²

“A LITTLE ACT OF REPARATION” TO SAVE THE GREATEST SINNERS. Yes, Our Lady affirms sadly, many souls are lost because of their scorn, their

blasphemies against Her... Thus, giving us the example of loving our enemies, She Herself intervenes, because She alone can still save these monsters of pride and ingratitude who have revolted against Her. As «Mother of Mercy and Mother of Pardon», as we sing in the Salve Mater, She intercedes for us before Her Son: may the filial devotion of faithful souls, and the Communions of reparation offered on the five First Saturdays to console Her outraged Heart, be accepted by Him in reparation for the crimes of sinners. Our Lady prays that He deign to accept this «little devotion», and take into account this «little act of reparation» to Her Immaculate Heart, and deign to grant pardon, in spite of everything, to the ingrates and blasphemers, to all the poor souls who have had the audacity to offend Her – She, His Most Holy Mother!

And as always, Our Lord grants Her desire. In this way He makes the devotion of reparation a sure and efficacious means of converting souls, many souls, among those who are in the greatest danger of being eternally lost. We must quote here a significant text in which “the great promise” itself is a secondary consideration, effacing itself before the primary intention of the Heart of Mary, which is the salvation of all sinners. In May of 1930, Sister Lucy wrote to Father Gonçalves:

«It seems to me that the good Lord, in the depths of my heart, insists that I ask the Holy Father to approve the devotion of reparation, which God Himself and the Most Holy Virgin deigned to request in 1925. *In consideration of this little devotion, They wish to give the grace of pardon to souls who have had the misfortune of offending the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, and the Most Holy Virgin promises to souls who will seek to make reparation to Her in this manner, to assist them in the hour of death with all the graces necessary for their salvation.»⁴¹³

REPARATION NECESSARY. To save souls, all souls, «especially those who are most in need», to snatch them all from the fire of hell which threatens them, is then, in the final analysis, the principal intention of the practice of the first Saturdays of the month, just as it was already the same intention Our Lady indicated on August 19, 1917, urgently inviting the three shepherds to pray and make sacrifices: «Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because they have nobody to pray and make sacrifices for them.»

The Blessed Virgin Mary has been constituted universal Mediatrix and Mother of Divine Grace. Nevertheless, by a design of Providence which wills us to be

joined to Her, She cannot act alone. She needs us, our consoling love and our “little devotions” of reparation, to save souls from hell. Exalted and terrible mystery of the communion of saints, which makes the salvation of many souls really dependent on our own generosity! And what a motive for generosity on our part! For how could we refuse this missionary action which Our Lady awaits of us, which She has made so easy to fulfil – remember that with the permission of a priest, all the exercises requested can be transferred to Sunday – when these same exercises are so efficacious, so fruitful? For through this devotion many souls in imminent danger of being eternally lost can obtain, at the last moment and as it were in spite of themselves, the grace of their conversion.

To console the Immaculate Heart of Mary pierced with thorns, *to make reparation* for the outrages It receives from sinners *by prayer and sacrifice*, such in the end is the most precise requirement of this first part of the Secret, which Our Lady came to recall and clarify at Pontevedra, in 1925: «*You, at least, try to console Me.*» Now the most perfect sacrifice, the most efficacious prayer, is of course the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Holy Communion offered to God in the spirit of reparation.⁴¹⁴

All this helps us understand the pressing insistence of Our Lady, Her ardent desire that this devotion of reparation be practiced everywhere as frequently as possible. This devotion is the dearest to Her, because it is the most perfect and therefore the most efficacious for the salvation of souls. Because She desires our cooperation at any price, She has joined the most wonderful promises to it...

“WAR AND PEACE DEPEND ON IT.” In fact, in addition to the conversion of sinners and our own eternal salvation, Our Lady has willed that the Communion of reparation be linked to another magnificent promise: the gift of peace. On March 19, 1939, Sister Lucy could write:

«Whether the world has war or peace depends on the practice of this devotion, along with the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is why I desire its propagation so ardently, especially because this is also the will of our dear Mother in Heaven.»⁴¹⁵

And on June 20 of the same year, she wrote:

«Our Lady promised to delay the scourge of war, if this devotion was propagated and practised. We see that She will obtain remission of this

chastisement to the extent that efforts are made to propagate this devotion; but I fear that we cannot do any more than we are doing and that God, being displeased, will pull back the arm of His mercy and let the world be ravaged by this chastisement which will be unlike any other in the past, horrible, horrible.»⁴¹⁶

Two months later, war had been declared. Still nothing had been done to correspond to the requests of Heaven.

FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND SECRET

This prophetic announcement brings us straight into a tragedy. It is the great tragedy at once both religious and political, which in twenty years led our Christian Europe into an atrocious war, the deadliest in all history, and then into another one even bloodier and still more horrible in its deadly consequences. Soon it was to deliver nations and almost entire continents into the slavery of Soviet barbarism. We shall now explain how Our Lady foretold this terrible tragedy, explaining its major phases and secret causes on July 13, 1917. This is the second part of Her great Secret.

THE CAPITAL SECRET: THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF SOULS. However, let us make it clear at the very beginning that this “second secret” is closely dependent on the first one, which has a primordial importance. For as we shall discover in the second part of our study, the great Divine policy revealed by the Queen of Heaven at the Cova da Iria, with its attractive promises of universal and enduring peace and also its threats of fearsome chastisements – this whole Divine policy is only an instrument used by Divine Mercy to obtain the salvation of souls, the greatest possible number of souls.

In the final analysis, it is to the first part of the Secret that we must always return, for it is undoubtedly the principal and most important one in the eyes of God. To save souls, all souls, from the only real evil because it is the only eternal one – to snatch them at any cost from the fire of hell – such is also the first concern of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. At Fatima, She revealed this Immaculate Heart as a refuge and ultimate recourse of sinners, even the most hateful and miserable, because She is the Mediatrix of Mercy, and Gate of Heaven. This is the first part of Her great Secret, because it is also the first secret

of Her Heart:

«Frightened, and as if to ask for help, we lifted our eyes up to Our Lady, who said to us with kindness and sadness:

«“You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.

«“If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace...

«“I shall come to ask for the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of the month.”»

Little Jacinta had understood perfectly this great warning of Our Lady for the salvation of souls. Her soul was completely penetrated by it, as this charming episode shows. «Sometimes (Lucy recalled) she would gather flowers from the field and sing to a melody, which she herself had invented, at the same time:

**«Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!
Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Convert sinners, save souls from hell!»⁴¹⁷**

In effect, these words sum up the whole essence of the “first Secret”: It is through the Immaculate Heart of Mary that the Holy Trinity wishes today to save our souls, all souls, to snatch them away from hell and open up Heaven to them.

SEE APPENDIX III: «SISTER LUCY EXPLAINS THE REPARATORY DEVOTION OF THE FIRST SATURDAYS» (after Chapter XII).

**SECOND PART OF THE SECRET: GULAG OR CHRISTENDOM
THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, SALVATION OF THE
NATIONS**

INTRODUCTION

THE SECOND SECRET: A GREAT DESIGN OF MERCY FOR THE SALVATION OF CHRISTENDOM

«You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»

After these words, which seem to us like the conclusion of the first part of Her great Secret, and the introduction to the second part, Our Lady continued:

«If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end.

«But if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign God gives you that He is about to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, famine and persecutions against the Church and the Holy Father.

«To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of the month.

«If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted and there will be peace.

«If not, she will spread her errors throughout the whole world, causing wars and persecutions against the Church. The good will be martyred. The Holy Father will have much to suffer. Various nations will be annihilated.»

The Secret is both spectacular and terrible. Its complex structure, bewildering at first sight, in fact expresses a message packed with meaning, which we shall discover little by little.⁴¹⁸ To begin with, however, let us look only at the general themes and principal ideas.

A SECRET FOR CHRISTENDOM. First important remark: this time it no longer concerns, at least directly, souls taken individually vis-à-vis the drama of

their eternal salvation. No, now we are dealing with nations and the Church, and their temporal salvation: war or peace for the nations, liberty or peace for the Church. In short, even if the word is not found there, the salvation of Christendom is the principal subject of this “second secret” of Our Lady. What are the essential themes? These are easy to discern.

1. THE GREAT DESIGN OF GOD:

WORLD PEACE CONFIDED TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

To understand the Secret correctly, we must always return to the central phrase which is the pivot, the divine oracle which determines the rest and from which the other parts flow: *«God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»*

The great design of God for our century, His irrevocable decision, is to make the Immaculate Heart of His Most Holy Mother loved, praised and glorified, by all souls and by all nations as well. To this Immaculate Heart, God has entrusted incomparable treasures of grace to be poured out on all Christendom, because He wishes Her to receive a solemn, official and public cult everywhere, and because He wills that She reign in truth over the Church and over all peoples. One word is enough to call to mind all the benefits of the temporal order: peace. In His love for Her and His eternal decree to make Her Mediatrix of all graces and dispenser of all good things, the Holy Trinity wishes to make Her, in our century, the source and the unique custodian of the gift of peace, to whom we must have recourse.

Little Jacinta had understood this quite well. Shortly before leaving for Lisbon, she explained it to her cousin, almost as though she were leaving us her last will and testament:

«Jacinta said to me: “It will not be long now before I go to Heaven. You will remain here to make it known that God wishes to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When you are to say this, don’t go and hide. Tell everybody that God grants us graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, that people are to ask Her for them; and that the Heart of Jesus wants the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be venerated at His side. *Tell them also to pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for peace, since God has entrusted it to Her.*”»⁴¹⁹

In Her most maternal kindness, Our Lady has even willed to make it clear how we are to ask of Her the precious gift of peace, and be sure of being heard. Her “little requests” are nothing less than the revelation of the best way of asking Her, a way in which men can be certain of meriting the gift of peace, because it is a way chosen by God Himself.

2. THE REQUESTS OF OUR LADY, CONDITIONS FOR WORLD PEACE

On July 13, 1917, even before revealing the great Secret to them, Our Lady had explained the first condition for peace to the children, so that the children could promptly make it known: «*I want you to continue reciting the Rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace in the world and the end of the war, because only She can help you.*»⁴²⁰ And during each of the subsequent apparitions, right up until October 13, Our Lady had repeated this same pressing invitation. This shows how important this point of the message is; this is still true today, because since that time, Sister Lucy has unceasingly reminded us of its urgency.

The Secret, however, mentions two other requests, and these are just as decisive. They express and summarize all the desires of Heaven. These two requests are *the Communion of Reparation on the five first Saturdays of the month*, because according to Her promise, Our Lady of Fatima came to ask for it in 1925 at Pontevedra, and *the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart*. Our Lady came to ask for this consecration at Tuy, in 1929. Later on we shall see in what circumstances She came.

Thus does God will to achieve His ends: to establish on earth the reign of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, not only over souls, but over all nations, and the whole of Christendom. The means are unassuming, simple, and easy – but as we will gradually discover, what a sublime and divine wisdom they disclose!

To invite men, who are so easily distracted and deaf to His appeals, to urge and finally compel them to accomplish the Divine Will regardless of the cost, God decided to link these humble requests of His Mother with wonderful promises and terrible chastisements. Line by line, the great Secret evokes the stages of these dramatic alternatives with which the Church and the nations have been confronted since then. First of all, it puts forward the way of obedience, which is rewarded by heavenly promises.

3. WONDERFUL PROMISES: HEAVEN FOR SOULS, PEACE FOR NATIONS

«If My requests are heeded», – these are the words Our Lady uses – what will happen? What graces, what signal blessings will Heaven pour down upon the earth? Our Lady of Fatima is neither verbose nor pretentious, as are so many of our false prophets of good things to come! On the contrary, what sobriety in Her words: «*Many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end.*» There it is. Is that all? Yes, because all is said there.

She promises an end, in the first place, to this terrible war of attrition which for almost three years had been ravaging Europe, causing rivers of blood to flow with no apparent results. In that summer of 1917, there was still no end in sight to the war. But Our Lady announces that for the time being, the chastisement will end, and soon the soldiers will return home. What good news and grounds for hope!

When the men finally come out of this ordeal of purification, if only they have the wisdom to understand the meaning of it, if only they learn their lesson and are converted, says Our Lady, peace will follow. It would be a true and genuine peace, a harmony between the nations as they return to fidelity to their Christian traditions. In each of these nations would reign the tranquillity of order in the service of the common good. Full liberty would finally be granted to the Church, whose work for the salvation of men would be facilitated and increased tenfold: «many souls will be saved, and there will be peace». Such is in fact the eternal ideal of Christendom. We dream of no other ideal, for outside of this one there are only chimerical utopias; sooner or later they always result in bloody catastrophes.

But when, for the second time in this great Secret, Our Lady reiterates Her promises, She gives them an astonishing precision, a concrete shape apt to move human hearts to accede to Her requests. By a real miracle of grace, the fulfilment of Her requests will preserve humanity from the horrible chastisements which threaten it. «To prevent this», She declares. Then above all there is the incomparable promise: «*If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted and there will be peace.*» This is the *Pax Christiana*, the true peace of Christendom, “the peace which the world cannot give”, as we chant in the Roman liturgy: *illam, quam mundus dare non potest, pacem*. By their own efforts, it is

impossible for men to attain it, but in 1917, Our Lady of Fatima promised it *to the whole world*. For in both Her Secret of July 13 as well as Her other messages of May 13 and October 13, Our Lady always spoke of *the peace of the whole world* to the three shepherds of Aljustrel.

As a Sovereign in Her own right, *Regina Pacis*, Our Lady indicates the concrete means by which this extraordinary peace is to be obtained: «*Russia will be converted.*» In fact, what a grace it would have been for the whole world if in 1929-1931, by a miracle of Heaven, Russia had suddenly been delivered from the barbarism of Soviet tyranny, not to mention the unfortunate centuries-old schism of the Russian Church, and finally returned in an official way to the sheepfold of Roman unity!

Surely the face of the world and the political history of this century would have been changed. The Second World War would not have taken place. And the heretical, schismatic or pagan countries, drawn by the example of an immense and powerful Russia, would have found the road leading back to Catholic unity. Having conquered the hearts of the Russian people, the Roman Church by this very fact would have regained its power and prestige everywhere.

Such, therefore, was the great plan of God for our epoch: to grant peace to the nations at the dawn of a century when material progress had turned the spectre of war into an apocalyptic menace. God also wished to return full liberty and conquering force to the Church after four centuries of inroads made by heresy and apostasy: Luther in 1517, Freemasonry in 1717, the Russian Revolution in 1917. Such was God's plan for extending to the whole world the Kingdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, prepared and heralded by the Reign of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

It was indeed a great design of mercy which God had conceived for the world, renewing through Our Lady of Fatima this oracle of Jeremiah the prophet: «For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of affliction, preparing for you a future full of hope.» (Jer. 29:11)

The preceding, then, summarizes in all their fullness – without us having distorted or unduly exaggerated them in any way – the promises made to the world in 1917 by Our Lady of Fatima. They are as wonderful as the chastisements corresponding to them are terrible and frightful.

4. TERRIBLE CHASTISEMENTS: HELL, WAR AND PERSECUTIONS

«The war is going to end (Our Lady continued), but if people do not cease offending God another worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI.» And She insisted, repeating for our blind “modern men”, who are no longer able to read the true “signs of the times”, the eternal lessons of sacred history; this war, even more atrocious and deadly than the first one, will, like the first war, be the chastisement of God, Who is justly angered at an apostate and rebellious humanity. Yes, Our Lady in Her goodness deigned to explain clearly the meaning of events, just like the prophets: it is God Who will «punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions against the Church and the Holy Father.»

When Our Lady outlined these chastisements for the second time, She made clear their nature and their cause. First of all, She gives the cause. Then, finally, this conversion required by Heaven is all summarized in the fulfilment of Our Lady’s requests. «If My requests are heeded... if not...» Such, in the final analysis, is the Will of God: that the future of humanity hang in the balance between these two alternatives. If Russia is not consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, if the devotion of reparation on the first Saturdays of the month is not propagated, God will use Russia with its pernicious errors of communism, and its bloody wars, as a devastating scourge, the instrument of His wrath over humanity: «If not, Russia will spread its errors throughout the world, causing wars, and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated.»

JUSTICE IN THE SERVICE OF MERCY

What a fearsome drama, what terrible menaces! Yet they remind modern man of the sovereignty of God, Who when He commands, expects to be obeyed. Imprisoned in the walls of their laicism, or completely secular vision of history, they think they are absolute masters of it, that God never intervenes in history. In a few words, Our Lady of Fatima sweeps away this foolish pride, this vain pretension. No, it is God who directs history. In our century He wishes to make His Most Holy Mother the Regent of His omnipotent Providence. If men refuse to enter into this great design of love and mercy, it will cost them dearly. Chastisements will rain down upon them until they finally understand and enter into His ways.

But if God directs His children as a sovereign Master, He also does so as a most wise Father: if He requests, if He promises and threatens, if He rewards and punishes through either peace or war, it is still by virtue of His mercy towards them; it is to save them for all eternity as it were in spite of themselves, moving their rebellious wills to finally be converted. This is the reason why He has doubled the dramatic choice incumbent upon them: the way of Heaven and the way of hell. There is another choice parallel to it: this time between temporal chastisements and rewards, to lead carnally inclined hearts on the road to salvation. God willed this correspondence; He willed that Christian peace with its wonderful benefits, both spiritual and temporal, be an image reminding us of the eternal peace in the midst of the heavenly Jerusalem: *beata pacis visio*, the blessed vision of peace. Similarly, God willed that war, with its black trail of horrors and atrocious sufferings already give us here below a terrifying vision of eternal chastisement.

This is why the great Secret of Our Lady is summed up in a double dramatic alternative, where the terms correspond to each other: Heaven or hell for all eternity. Already here below as well, either the blessing of peace and the good life in Christendom under the benevolent and protective eyes of the Immaculate Virgin, or war and famine, persecutions, blood and tears in the Soviet gulag.

THE RESPONSE OF MEN

To avert so many evils, and to merit the wonderful promises, so that the Queen of Heaven pour out upon Christendom a shower of graces and blessings as She had announced, *it sufficed for men to obey*. This would have been enough. But it was absolutely necessary. And it did not take place.

“THEY DID NOT WISH TO HEED MY REQUESTS.”⁴²¹ Since that time, the other branch of the alternative has been accomplished to the letter, inexorably. We will not describe right away this exact coincidence between the actual events and the prophecy, the final phases of which are being fulfilled today, before our eyes. We shall describe it little by little, as we show how first the Shepherds of the Church and then the faithful were not docile to the voice of their Mother, resisted Her appeals, and continually delayed the fulfilment of Her requests.

A HAPPY EXCEPTION; “THE LAND OF HOLY MARY”. As a guarantee of the veracity of Her promises however, and a proof of Her faithfulness in keeping

them, Our Lady of Fatima wished to accomplish a miracle in favour of Her chosen nation: a miracle to serve as an example for others, to the extent Her requests were obeyed. This initial miracle of the conversion of a whole people, as well as its temporal, political and social salvation, takes on a prophetic value in our eyes. For in the end, after all the justly merited chastisements, the Immaculate Heart of Mary will triumph and all Her promises will be fulfilled for all Christendom: «and a certain period of peace will be given to the world.»

APPENDIX - REMARKS ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE SECRET

At first glance, the structure of this second part of the Secret is confusing.

The prophecy seems to first predict events in the order that they unfolded historically: the end of the First World War (1918); the night illumined by an unknown light (1938); the Second World War (1939).

Then, suddenly, it seems to go back in time: «To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart (1929), and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays (1925).» Then come the announcement of new promises and the threat of new chastisements, centred around the theme of Russia.

Do these new prophecies concern an era coming later in time than the first one? Too quick a reading of the Secret would lead us to believe this. This has often led to erroneous interpretations. In this case the great Secret is supposed to have prophesied: 1. The end of the First World War. 2. The Second World War. 3. The wars stirred up later on by Russia. Since this scheme seems to correspond to the historical reality, there is a danger of substituting it for the real structure of the secret which is different, more complex, and richer in meaning.

A SECRET IN TWO PARTS

In fact, if we analyze this text attentively, we discover that it is perfectly constructed in two strictly parallel parts, where fourteen terms rigorously correspond to each other, following a clear, logical plan. We present here this rigorous correspondence in the form of a synopsis. To see how the two terms correspond to each other, it suffices to read first the column on the left, and then

the one on the right. To read the text of the entire authentic Secret, one can read the entire column on the left, then the whole column on the right.

I. THE SALVIFIC INTENTION OF GOD IS EVOKED

A./ Description of hell: «To save them.»

A.'/ Description of chastisements:
«To prevent this.»

II. OUR LADY STATES HER REQUESTS

B./ «God wishes to establish in the world
devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»

B.'/ «I will come to ask for the
consecration of Russia to My
Immaculate Heart and the
Communion of Reparation on the
First Saturdays.»

III. FIRST POSSIBILITY: IF MEN OBEY

C./ «If what I say to you is done.»

C.'/ «If My requests are heeded.»

IV. OUR LADY STATES A DOUBLE PROMISE

D./ «Many souls will be saved.»

D.'/ «Russia will be converted

E./ «And there will be peace. The war will
end.»

E.'/ and there will be peace.»

V. SECOND POSSIBILITY: IF MEN REFUSE TO OBEY

F./ «But if men do not cease offending God.»

F.'/ «If not» (= If My requests are not heeded).

VI. THE THREAT OF TERRIBLE CHASTISEMENTS

G./ «Another worse war will begin in the reign of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign God gives you that He is about to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, famine, persecutions of the Church and the Holy Father.»

G.'/ «She (Russia) will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions against the Church. The good will be martyred. The Holy Father will have much to suffer. Various nations will be annihilated.»

THE KEY TO THE DRAMA

The question occurs: why this construction of the Secret in two parts? What meaning might it have?

First of all it seems that this text, where twice in a row the most attractive promises alternate with the most terrifying chastisements, is much more eloquent, more convincing, more persuasive than a straightforward exposition would be, simply listing events as they follow chronologically.

However, there is something else also. This duplication, this “rebounding” effect of the prophecy, in which are repeated the same themes corresponding to each other with precision, visibly tends to underline the capital, decisive importance of the sentence found in the centre of the exposition. This becomes the key phrase. In expressing the requests of Heaven as precisely as possible, She puts forward the unique condition of salvation, the unique remedy for all the terrible evils mentioned in the text, and which are stated again even more vigorously: *«To prevent this (the chastisements), I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays.»*

This is the heart of the drama. The structure of the text brings this out in the most striking way. This is the key to the prophecy, for everything depends on this twofold request: everything which precedes it and everything which comes after it. Placed in the centre of the presentation of promises and chastisements, it clearly stands out as the unique condition of their fulfilment:

A. First presentation of the promises.

B. First presentation of the chastisements. Our Lady's requests, conditions for salvation.

A'. Second presentation of the promises.

B'. Second presentation of the chastisements.

ONE SINGLE PROPHECY

Once the structure of the Secret is explained, everything is clear. There is one single prophecy; the various elements of it are expressed in successive developments: the second is not a simple repetition of the first, but each element gives greater precision and brings out more of the implications. Now let us repeat our "synoptic" reading of the text, pointing out a few interesting remarks which it suggests.

THE PLAN OF GOD AND THE REQUESTS OF OUR LADY. To call to mind the great design of God's mercy, the first text simply says, «To save them», referring to the phrase immediately preceding it: «You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go.» The second formula, «To prevent this», is much more complete, because in addition to the danger of eternal damnation, it also calls to mind the temporal chastisements which prefigure it here below. Heaven proposes to us obedience to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the unique means of preserving ourselves from all the evils which threaten us, the eternal ones and now also the temporal ones. What extraordinary, stupefying importance Heaven thus attributes to these two small requests: the consecration of Russia and the devotion of reparation on the first Saturdays of the month!

WONDERFUL PROMISES. «If what I say to you is done». «If My requests are heeded». This is the unique condition for the fulfilment of Her promises. The two formulas are equivalent; both of them refer us to the apparitions of

Pontevedra and Tuy.

As for the promises, they are twofold. Both are of the spiritual order: «Many souls will be saved». The second formula, which introduces the theme of Russia, gives a wonderful detail on the meaning: «Russia will be converted». The similarity is eloquent. In the eyes of God and the Blessed Virgin, the conversion of Russia is before anything else the grace of eternal salvation granted to millions of souls returning to the flock of Christ's one, true Church, and put back on the road to salvation by that same Church.

Then comes the second promise, added to the first almost as a “throw-in”: the temporal benefits which follow and ordinarily accompany supernatural grace. «And there will be peace». Yes, this is an essential point of the message of Fatima, although the primary element is the salvation of souls. Then peace follows, as the fruit of the conversion of peoples.

Let it be noted that in the text of the Secret, it would be wrong to exaggerate the importance of the promise concerning the end of the First World War: «The war is going to end.» This announcement – which is a part of the message intended to be revealed right away, since Our Lady was to repeat it on October 13 – figures here only in passing. It could almost be put in parentheses. For it merely illustrates – like a limited promise, the fulfilment of which is at hand and already granted – the more vast and unconditional promise which constitutes one of the essential elements of the Secret: «many souls will be saved and there will be peace.»

This peace which is mentioned three times in the great Secret is a universal and lasting peace which God wishes to grant to the world in our time by an extraordinary miracle of grace, «granted» to men by the Mediation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This wonderful peace which Our Lady proposed to the world in 1917 on a condition is the same peace which will certainly come in Our Lady's eventual triumph, which She also predicted: «In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph... and a certain period of peace shall be granted to the world.»

TERRIBLE CHASTISEMENTS. Once again, the resemblance in the two successive expressions is a rich source of instruction for us. What is the cause of these divine chastisements? There are two reasons.

«But if people do not cease offending God», Our Lady says first of all, employing the formula which She was to repeat with such sorrow on October 13. Yes, it is all the sins of men which draw down on the world the chastisements of God. The second time, however, a single phrase sums it all up: «If not», meaning, «If My requests are not heeded». The brevity is striking.

For Heaven, to not stop offending God and to refuse to fulfil the requests of Our Lady are one thing. Indeed, these two requests, which seem like mere nothings, are so well chosen by God that they serve as an infallible gauge of the dispositions of men in this regard. To conform to them with docility as soon as they are known is already showing a genuine and sincere desire for conversion. On the other hand, to refuse them obstinately is to reveal one's own blindness of intellect and hardness of heart, a proud pretence of knowing the means of salvation better than the Blessed Virgin Herself. It is like resisting God to His Face, since He desires more than ever today to grant Heaven to souls and peace to nations by the sweet and powerful mediation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The two announcements of coming chastisements are equally complementary: the first one gives prominence to the Second World War, still worse than the war of 1914-1918, while the second reveals the profound causes, unmask the secret reasons for it and describes its lasting and disastrous consequences of worldwide scope. The cause of the chastisements? It is the non-consecration of Russia in conformity with the precise requests of Our Lady. The secret reason, the cause for this horrible future war breaking out? It is the non-conversion of Russia. For the Secret leaves no room for doubt: if Russia had been converted beforehand, the Second World War would not have taken place. The consequences? They are so terrible in this context that the disaster of 1939-1945 seems like only an episode, a first phase of the true chastisement. This true chastisement is the war waged everywhere today by Communist Russia, by its armies and those of its satellites, by its emissaries and by its spies, finally by all the traitors and ideologues it has been able to enrol in the service of its satanic combat for world domination by Communism, a godless power which persecutes the Church.

THE APOCALYPSE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

After the dramatic exposition of such promises and chastisements, we now have an idea of the astonishing, incalculable scope of the event of Fatima. The great

prophetic revelation of the Immaculate Virgin at the Cova da Iria on July 13, 1917, begins to look like an Apocalypse for our century. However, before attempting to explain it in the light of theology, before demonstrating how it has been fulfilled to the letter, inexorably – in our contemporary history right down to our own vitally important times – it would be good beforehand to first go over all the facts, scrutinize the structure of the text to eliminate all the possible wrong understandings, or inexactitudes, and attempt to propose the most certain and faithful interpretation possible.

A task remains for us: to compare the Secret with history, to gauge its exactness and the inexhaustible richness of its content. These are additional striking proofs that all the words of the great Secret really come from the Immaculate Mother of God, Queen of Prophets and Heavenly Empress of Christendom.

SECTION I: The Salvation of Portugal: a miracle and an exemplar for our times.

CHAPTER I

BEFORE AND AFTER FATIMA: THE DAWN OF SALVATION (MAY 13, 1917 - DECEMBER 14, 1918)

Poor “Land of Holy Mary”! When its “Angel Guardian”, “the Angel of Portugal” came in the summer of 1916 to invite the three shepherd children of Aljustrel to pray and sacrifice themselves for peace in their country, it was in a very sad and pitiful state!

Economic failure, aggravated still more by the recent entrance into the war, disorder and anarchy, dissensions and murders, assassination attempts which had become an everyday occurrence – all these created the atmosphere of a real civil war. The Church had been banned from society, reduced to silence, persecuted in every way. In short, Portugal in that hour experienced the darkest period in its history. Seeing Portugal thus forced to live in the shadows, the slave of a tyrannical and sectarian power which seemed as though it would never loosen the vice of its oppression, who would have believed that only one year later the dawn of salvation would come? That before long it would enjoy perfect peace both internally and externally, that its Church would be wonderfully restored, and that it would regain the radiance and fervour of its peak centuries?

A MIRACLE WHICH IS POLITICAL AS WELL

The event could not have been foreseen. And if in fact all these things did take place, it was only thanks to the miraculous intervention of the most powerful Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Mediatrix. In six months She did for Her “faithful nation” what neither the monarchy nor the Church had been able to do in over a century.

For Portugal was indeed a slave, with chains solidly riveted upon her. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, as Cardinal Cerejeira observed, «the darkness of night» grew increasingly black over the poor “Land of Holy Mary”, with no interruption. Freemasonry had taken root in the country and became encrusted there, without anyone being able to check its power or shake off its growing stranglehold over the government and all society. What a sombre history! It is almost grounds for weeping or despair, for the victory always went

to the worst adversaries of the Church, and the worst enemies of the nation, The authorities had suddenly become powerless, paralyzed – or were themselves corrupted and perverted. They were unable to organize any effective opposition.

Yet, suddenly, after May 13, 1917, everything changed. The “Morning Star” began shining brightly over the sky of Portugal, announcing the dawn of the Catholic renaissance, and the nation’s recovery. In a single blow, and by a miracle of Heaven, those who were used to being the persecuted and the vanquished witnessed the victory of their cause. In a few months the Masonic sect, «this synagogue of Satan», as the Venerable Pope Pius IX called it, would soon lose all its prestige, and see its ascendancy vanish into thin air.

The miracle of Fatima – no one still dares to call it that today! – is a political miracle also: in coming down to the Cova da Iria, the Immaculate Virgin came to liberate Portugal from the oppressive yoke of diabolical, anti-Christian and anti-national Freemasonry, which had enjoyed a crushing domination over the country for a century and a half. It is this victory granted to Her people by the Queen of the Holy Rosary, «victorious in all the battles of God», and «terrible as an army in battle array», that we must now describe...

Before that, however, to understand the reality and the extent of the saving miracle of 1917, we must first review the deadly successes enjoyed by the forces of evil, which had managed to lead the country to the brink of disaster. Already for this reason alone, this history serves as an example for us. For all the old Catholic countries, which once constituted the splendour of Christendom – France, Spain, Italy, Poland – have not they all undergone for the last two centuries, an increasing and apparently inescapable domination by the Powers of Darkness? And if we all are suffering from the same evils, will it not be the same remedy, tomorrow, that can heal us all?

I. PORTUGAL BEFORE FATIMA: A CENTURY AND A HALF OF MASONIC DOMINATION

After Portugal’s two peak centuries – as a Catholic, monarchical, colonial and missionary power – the marvellous restoration of 1640, which ended sixty years of Spanish domination, unfortunately did not endure.⁴²²

From the dawn of the eighteenth century, the clouds grew darker over the

horizon of this little nation of Portugal. Its immense colonial empire aroused the covetousness of the English and Dutch.

A DISASTROUS TREATY. First came the disastrous “Treaty of Methuen”. On May 16, 1703, the British ambassador, Sir John Methuen, succeeded in imposing on King Pedro II an alliance in which all the advantages would be with Great Britain. While England promised to guarantee the integrity of Portuguese territory – an easy promise to make, and which moreover was never kept! – in return the British acquired almost a complete stranglehold over Portugal’s economy and commercial life, which soon began suffocating, and increasingly so during the nineteenth century, under this vice-like political grip.⁴²³

ANGLO-PROTESTANT FREEMASONRY. Even more serious: in 1727, ten years after its foundation in London, the Great Lodge of England was founded in Portugal, at the same time as in Spain. Since that time its pernicious influence, which was invariably in the service of Anglo-Protestant interests, increased uninterruptedly, to the point where one historian of Fatima, Canon Galamba, could write: «Freemasonry has been and continues to be the instigator of all the blots on our history.»⁴²⁴

THE MARQUIS DE POMBAL, OR FREEMASONRY IN POWER (1750-1777)

With Sebastiano José de Carvalho, Marquis de Pombal, the “Land of Holy Mary” experienced for the first time an openly anti-Catholic power. This all-powerful minister of King Joseph I managed to dominate the country like an absolute master for twenty-seven years, from 1750 to 1777. He was a notorious freemason, whose ferocious hatred against the Church took the place of any policy. And because the Jesuits were the greatest help and most powerful force in the Portuguese Church, he plotted their ruin. During the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, the Jesuits demonstrated once again their devotion and usefulness. They enjoyed the gratitude of the people, and their influence with the king offset the influence of the king’s minister, the freemason Carvalho. The Jesuits were the last obstacle to Carvalho’s absolute domination over the country. He had no qualms about using the most odious procedures to bring about their ruin.

AN UNPARDONABLE CRIME: THE EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS. «On September 3, 1759, Pombal made the king sign an edict expelling the Jesuits

from all his lands. On the 16th, 127 Fathers had to leave for Italy, then 59 more, and 300 young scholastics who had refused to abandon their vocation. All of them were cast upon the shores of the Papal States. Once that was done, the missions' turn came. Everywhere the agents of Pombal were able to reach, in China, India, the Congo or Brazil, the missionaries were removed. Many were shut up, and left to rot (the word is not an exaggeration) in the subterranean prisons of Balem and Fort St. Julian... In the course of these brutal expulsions, no fewer than 270 religious died. After this, Pombal continued his campaign of calumnies against the Jesuits.»⁴²⁵ The campaign against the Jesuits succeeded so well that it managed to obtain the suppression of the Society first in France (1764), then in Spain (1767), and finally for the whole Church in 1773.

By expelling the Jesuits, Pombal had dealt a blow to the heart of the Portuguese Church. Their departure suddenly created an enormous void which was never filled. Unlike France and Spain, the Society of Jesus was practically the only congregation which was solidly implanted in the country. This expulsion, which gave a free hand to the Masonic lodges and their anticlerical propaganda, was to have disastrous consequences for the nation.⁴²⁶

THE PROPAGATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY VIRUS

There followed the reign of Dona Maria I, which partly repaired the damage. Following the opposite of Pombal's policies, Maria I restored the liberties of the Church, and some degree of order and prosperity to the country. Then came the French Revolution. The revolution once again plunged the country into new difficulties.

It was the foolish and criminal pretension of Napoleon to reorganize Europe according to his visionary fancies which dealt a mortal blow to Portugal as it traditionally had been: Catholic, monarchical, and colonial. After the Treaty of Fontainebleau, which in 1807 foolishly divided the territory of Portugal between France and Spain, Portugal experienced from 1807 to 1810 three successive invasions of Napoleon's armies.

The consequences of this abnormal political situation were even worse. To drive out the French, the English first entered the country, and then settled down for a permanent stay. Having persuaded, if not forced the king, Joao VI, and the royal family to go into exile in Brazil – an act which the people looked on as

tantamount to treason – the English with Beresford secured the Regency of the Kingdom.

The Napoleonic occupation had an even more pernicious consequence. More than anything else, it contributed to the spread of the revolutionary virus into Portugal. Thanks to the Masonic lodges, it became more and more virulent in no time at all. “French culture”, and by no means the best, gained the preponderance: the “philosophes” of the eighteenth century, the romanticists, the liberals, in a word the anticlericals of every persuasion including Michelet, Quinet, Victor Hugo and company all enjoyed great success. They served as instruments of Masonic propaganda.

REVOLUTION, CHARTER AND CIVIL WAR (1820-1834). In 1820, revolution broke out in Lisbon, and Beresford was forced to return to England. Brazil was soon contaminated also, and King Joao VI, who had been in exile there, had to promise to return to Portugal, leaving Brazil to his son, Don Pedro, a supporter of the insurgents. The aging king, on his return to Lisbon, swore fidelity to the liberal Constitution, approved by the Cortes in 1822. During this time his son, Don Pedro, proclaimed Brazil independent and proclaimed himself Emperor.

To top off the whole disaster, at the death of Joao VI the country was plunged into civil war, at the very moment it was about to be saved. In fact, the second son of the king, Don Miguel, who had been hostile to the Revolution from the beginning, had managed in 1828 to dissolve the legislature and summoned the traditional Cortes, thus restoring a fully Catholic and legitimate monarchy. Don Miguel enjoyed the support both of the Church and the majority of the people.

However his brother Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, who himself was a freemason, soon abdicated in favour of his son and prepared to reconquer Portugal. After eight years of civil war, he finally carried the day thanks to the military help of England. Once again British troops trampled over Portuguese soil, to the nation's ruin.

THE PERSECUTIONS BY MINISTER AGUIAR (1834). The Church, which had supported Don Miguel, then went through a period of harsh persecutions. In 1834, the new king, who reigned under the name of Pedro IV, broke off diplomatic relations with the Holy See. On May 28, his minister, Aguiar, issued a decree suppressing the religious orders, confiscating all their property. The

blow came down hard, especially for the overseas provinces. Don Pedro died only a few months after his victory, after which the country was delivered over to anarchy and civil war for eight years.

THE LIBERAL AND MASONIC MONARCHY. In 1842, the minister Costa Cabral succeeded in bringing back some semblance of order. Diplomatic relations with the Holy See were re-established, and thereafter the Church was no longer openly persecuted. This semi-tolerance permitted the reconstitution of some religious orders and the flowering of a rather intense Catholic life, especially in the north. The press, however, remained entirely in the hands of the freemasons, and won much of the city population over to the freethinkers' cause.

In 1846, England, Spain and France intervened once more to save the liberal monarchy from an uprising seeking to restore Don Miguel.

FREEMASONRY OPTS FOR A REPUBLIC. After the Paris Commune, a part of the freemasons stopped supporting the monarchy. In 1873, they organized a violently anticlerical republican party.

«In spite of some outward successes (inauguration of the Basilica of Sameiro in 1869, celebration of the sixth centenary of Saint Anthony in 1895), Catholics were continually losing their influence and their rights.»⁴²⁷ While the republicans organized themselves on the pattern of the Italian *Carbonari*, the monarchists showed the whole country the spectacle of their own division, showing their inability to resist the Masons. The monarchists seemed to have no concern for the good of the nation.

There was, however, one last seesaw: in May, 1906, faced with increasing anarchy, King Don Carlos appealed to Joao Franco, who one year later proclaimed the dissolution of the Chamber and restored one-man-rule. The king had finally understood. Unfortunately, he was too late: on February 1, 1908, two members of the carbonari, Buica and Costa, assassinated him, along with his son the heir apparent, in the Commerce square in Lisbon. «This sect breathing crime», as the Venerable Pope Pius IX called it, had once again carried the day, discouraging all attempts at a reaction.

The crown returned to young Don Manuel, who was only eighteen years old. He felt obliged to dismiss Joao Franco and completely reverse his policy. He wished to curry favour with the republicans, wooing them by acceding to their demands.

This spelled the end of the monarchy.

THE REVOLUTION OF OCTOBER 1910

The revolution broke out with disturbing rapidity. During the night of October 3, 1910, twenty of the carbonari's men, at a prearranged signal, broke into the barracks of the sixteenth infantry regiment. Since the leaders were unable to intervene, a simple official of the navy's book-keeping department, Machado dos Santos – who had founded the *carbonaria alta venda* around the end of 1917 – opened the doors of the weapons cache to the populace. After an unfortunate scuffle, which disarmed the loyalists at the very moment when the insurgents believed all was lost, the Republic was proclaimed on the morning of October 5, at City Hall. A provisional government was established, composed of all the leading freemasons, while the royal family sought shelter at Gibraltar. Of course the new Republic could count on the help of Paris and London, which the Grandmaster of Portuguese Freemasonry, Magalhaes Lima, had gone to solicit a few months earlier.⁴²⁸

THE PERSECUTIONS AND THE “CRIMINAL LAWS”. Just as was the case with Mexico during the same era, the Portuguese revolution fiercely persecuted the Church from the very beginning. Churches were pillaged, three convents, particularly those of the Jesuits, were attacked and sacked, and many religious were harassed. Father Fragues, a French Lazarist, was murdered, as was a Portuguese priest. But it was particularly in its anticlerical legislation that the Republic of Lisbon manifested its fanaticism.

Scarcely had the provisional government been installed when it began devoting its entire attention to an antireligious policy, in spite of a disastrous economic situation. A hatred against God and His Church this intense could not endure any delay. Already on October 10 – five days after the inauguration of the Republic – a decree renews the laws of Pombal and of Aguiar: all convents and monasteries and establishments of all orders are suppressed, no matter what their denomination. All religious are expelled, their goods confiscated. The Jesuits are treated relatively benevolently, by Pombal's standards: they are declared to have forfeited their Portuguese citizenship.

At that point a series of laws and decrees followed each other like a train out of hell. On November 3, a divorce law was passed; then a law recognizing the

legitimacy of children born outside wedlock, a law on cremation, on the secularization of cemeteries, abolition of the religious oath, suppression of religious teaching in the schools, prohibition of the wearing of the cassock. Nothing is forgotten: the ringing of church bells and times of worship are subjected to certain restraints, the public celebration of religious feasts is suppressed, etc. The government even interfered with the seminaries, arrogating the right to name the professors and determine the programs. This whole series of persecution laws culminated in the *law of Separation of Church and State, which was passed on April 20, 1911*.

Finally, the victory of Freemasonry was complete. The author of all these wicked laws, Afonso Costa, declared at that time: «Thanks to this law of separation, in two generations Catholicism will be completely eliminated in Portugal.»⁴²⁹

He had not counted on the clairvoyance and firmness of the Holy Pontiff who then governed the Church, or the protection of the heavenly Padroeira.

SAINT PIUS X: A LAW WHICH IS “NULL AND VOID”. Thanks to Saint Pius X, who rejected all attempts at conciliation and compromise, just as he had in the case of France six years earlier, the Church in Portugal escaped the worst. In his encyclical *Jamdudum in Lusitania* of May 24, 1911, he forcefully condemned «the inhumanity of the crimes which oppress the Church» in Portugal. «As soon as the Republic became the form of government (he declared), an uninterrupted series of measures were promulgated, which breathe an implacable hatred against the Church.» The Pope also firmly condemned «the most evil and pernicious law of separation of Church and State», denouncing «its monstrous absurdity», and its outrageous treatment of the Church, which it would reduce to «an odious servitude». The holy Pope continued:

«Therefore the consciousness of our apostolic duty lays upon us an obligation, in the presence of such impudence and audacity of the enemies of God, to watch with the greatest vigilance over the dignity and honour of religion, and to maintain the sacrosanct prerogatives of the Catholic Church. *We reprove, condemn and reject the law of separation of the Portuguese Republic and the Church: a law which mocks God and repudiates the Catholic faith... We raise a solemn protest against its authors, and all those who had any part in it. We declare and denounce as null and void all that this law decrees contrary to the inviolable rights of the Church.*»⁴³⁰

Surely by design, this firm condemnation was dated May 24, «on the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, help of Christians». Thanks to Saint Pius X, the Church in Portugal had refused all compromise, and remained indefectibly united to the See of Peter. In the midst of these torments, the Church remained a cohesive force: the persecuted Catholics were solidly behind their clergy, who by solemn and public protests resisted the government.

In the face of this unforeseen resistance from a hierarchy which they had not expected to be so combative, the fury of the sectarians saw only one solution: banishment. Thus, the majority of the country's bishops were exiled: the Patriarch of Lisbon, the Archbishops of Braga and Evora, the bishops of Porto and Viseu, and many others. Many priests were imprisoned, such as good Father Cruz⁴³¹ or Father José da Silva, the future Bishop of Leiria.

Although it was sorely tried, the Portuguese Church, by following the directives of Saint Pius X, had saved the essential: its faith, which remained pure of any contagion of liberal and revolutionary ideas. It also preserved its unity, the bonds of which grew tighter through persecution.

THE POISONED FRUITS OF A SATANIC REVOLUTION. Yet, all this time, the revolution continued its ravages and destructive work in every area. In the political order there was anarchy. The country was given over to dissension and the worst disorders: strikes everywhere, trouble in the streets, party rivalries, and a rapid succession of puppet governments. In 1912, an attempted *coup d'état* by the monarchist partisans of Don Miguel failed. Another coup was attempted in 1915 and also failed.

Later on, Salazar described the anarchy of that time in this way: «A disorder which was not only a lack of order, but the combination of all positive elements of disintegration, ruin, and national dissolution.»⁴³²

Freemasonry, however, which was master of the Republic, continued to place its members in all levels of administration, tirelessly pursuing its principal work, the only one which it was able to pursue effectively and passionately: the struggle against religion.

We must not be mistaken: bad laws are always extremely harmful, and before long they produce in the people their rotten fruits of corruption and demoralization. Canon Formigao was very strong on this point. He wrote: «The

evil which was already great during the institution of the Republic grew frighteningly worse during the first years of the new regime, in the period of open persecution of the Church and dissolution of morals.» He mentions the authorization of divorce and «the really unheard-of growth of legal and illegal prostitution, especially in highly populated areas.» The slanderous campaigns of the liberal and jacobin press against the clergy, and especially against the religious orders, aroused hostility to them in a great part of the city dwellers. In short, «the religious life of the Portuguese people was terribly shaken.»⁴³³

Barthas gives a good summary of this deplorable religious situation:

«Masonic impiety took advantage of the disorder to sow irreligion in the masses. Freedom of worship was hindered by numerous restrictions, the carrying out of apostolic works became almost impossible. The religious orders were suppressed or paralyzed. Moreover, little by little the seminaries emptied, and the clergy, impoverished and chained by restrictive laws, became too scarce to maintain a profound religious life. The Catholic press was suffocated, reduced to a few weeklies in the provinces, without serious influence on the masses.

«The times were evil. The future was even more sombre.»⁴³⁴

When the First World War came, and the Republic foolishly involved the country in it, although Portugal was already on the brink of economic catastrophe, the situation only grew worse. In spite of everything, the sectarians did not give up. The historian Costa Brochado reviewed the instances of pillages of churches perpetrated in the year 1917 alone: «Sixty-nine in the provinces, forty-two in Lisbon, in the majority of cases profanation of the sacred species, with the connivance of the police and government, at least in Lisbon.

Occasionally, one still finds ruins of churches which were never rebuilt.»⁴³⁵

ERRORS, WARS AND PERSECUTIONS

Here was the result of a sorry century and a half of Masonic domination. In Portugal, the ravages effected by this «perverse sect», as Pius IX called it, were incalculable, perhaps greater than any other country. By the poison of its insidiously propagated errors, by its repeated crimes, its revolutions, its anarchy, Masonry was truly a pestiferous influence over the country.

We are reminded of the words of Venerable Pope Pius IX, during the consistory of September 25, 1865. How literally they apply to the poor “Land of Holy Mary”! Deploring the current disasters, he said bitterly: «May it please Heaven that monarchs lend an ear to the words of Our Predecessor (Clement XI, condemning Freemasonry in 1738)! Would to God that they had not been so “soft” in such a grave matter! For had this been the case, neither we nor our fathers, would ever have had to deplore so many seditious movements, so many incendiary wars, which are setting all Europe ablaze, or so many bitter evils which have afflicted and still afflict the Church.»⁴³⁶

THE VICISSITUDES OF THE COUNTER-CHURCH. Masonry is indeed just that, a Counter-Church, because it is animated by an unquenchable hatred against God, against Christ and against His Church. Using any means at its disposal to gain power, the Masonic sect has continually stirred up *wars and persecutions*, already fulfilling what the Immaculate Virgin was to say about Bolshevism in 1917. This is hardly astonishing, because Bolshevism is not something absolutely new, nor was it the effect of “spontaneous generation”. Rather it was the perverse fruit of Freemasonry, just as Masonry was itself the «daughter of the Reformation», to use the just expression of Msgr. Jouin. From 1717 to 1917 there is a perfect continuity, just as had been the case between 1517 and 1717. The coincidence in these dates is striking.

WHEN THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN INTERVENES IN POLITICS. The year 1917 is a turning point in modern history. The second centenary of Freemasonry was celebrated even at Rome by sacrilegious processions, while the October revolution broke out in Russia. The event of Fatima, under its twofold aspect, historical and prophetic, introduces us to the heart of the drama. Its great Secret – all historians agree in stressing the coincidence between the dates, which is so imposing – brings us into the third act, the most terrible stage of this drama. The protagonist is the final stage of the Counter-Church: atheistic communism, «intrinsically perverse». But in its immediate context, that of Masonic Portugal in 1917, Our Lady of Fatima also intervened as a Sovereign in the preceding phase of this great combat. The “Two Cities” spoken of by St. Augustine are here opposed: Masonry, whether deist or atheist, but antichrist in either case, works and struggles to destroy the Church by first destroying Christendom.

There were patriots in Portugal who foresaw that since the nation was beset with so many disasters – political, moral and religious – its salvation could only come from Heaven. Such people had well apprized the extent of the struggle and its

spiritual dimension. With confidence they turned to the Immaculate Virgin, the heavenly *Padroeira*: the “Rosary Crusade”, founded in 1915, enjoyed such great success that for the month of Mary the following year (May, 1916), the churches of Lisbon were full. Among the crowds, unbelievably, were a good number of soldiers in uniform.⁴³⁷

It was then that the Angel Guardian of Portugal, the *Angelus Pacis*, appeared at Fatima as a Precursor, announcing that deliverance was at hand.

II. FATIMA 1917: «THE DAWN OF LIGHT AND HOPE»

On May 13, 1931, in the name of the entire episcopate of Portugal which was present, and in the midst of a crowd of three hundred thousand people, Cardinal Cerejeira could give thanks to the Virgin Mary for the miracle She had performed. He proclaimed: «Our Lady of Fatima, You have deigned to come down to our land like the Morning Star, a sign of benediction, announcing the dawn of light and hope after the darkness of the night.»⁴³⁸

This is exactly what had happened. Even if the social and political salvation of Portugal did not immediately and definitively follow the profusion of supernatural graces poured out at the Cova da Iria, after May 13, 1917, everything soon changed in the souls of the faithful, when they learned that the Blessed Virgin Herself, their Queen and their Mother, and Heavenly Protectress, had deigned to visit them. With a single blow, She caused hope to spring up anew, along with the certainty of the victory of The Faith against the persecutors. If Heaven deigned to intervene, the ratio of strength between the forces was soon to be reversed.

Beginning on the day after July 13, which had drawn three or four thousand people, the sect had felt threatened. It was right. Already its domination over the masses was shaken. From month to month, drawn by accounts of atmospheric prodigies and the announcement of the great miracle, the pilgrims came in increasing numbers. On August 13, there were between eighteen and twenty thousand people, and on September 13 there were perhaps thirty thousand. On October 13, seventy thousand pilgrims or curious folk had come from all over Portugal to be there for the promised miracle. Faced with this great movement of faith and popular devotion, the sect and all the public authorities remained powerless, inert. They did not know what to do. They could do nothing, because

they had found a force more powerful than they were. Finally! As for the good people, who up until then had been continually oppressed, scorned for their faith and age-old devotions, they left on the evening of October 13 comforted and full of hope. They were sure that as God and His Holy Mother had manifested Their power in such a striking way, they would also gain a great victory over all the enemies of religion. As the journalist of *O Seculo* relates: «The first pilgrims to leave are those who had come first, with their shoes atop their heads or suspended from their canes. *Their souls are full of joy* as they leave, to spread *the good news* in the villages, that is, those which were not completely emptied of people to come here.» As for the priests, the same journalist further observed that «they could hardly hide the satisfaction which appears so often *on the faces of the triumphant.*»⁴³⁹

Thus throughout the whole country from Algarve to Minho, a great movement of faith and popular piety was raised up by the miracles of Fatima, which began to shake the hold of the tyrannical persecutors. This decisive influence of the apparitions in the Cova da Iria in national life was brought out fully by the Portuguese historian, Costa Brochado. We can hardly do better than to quote long excerpts from his works.⁴⁴⁰

OCTOBER 14, 1917: A FIRST DEFEAT FOR THE FREEMASONS

«The first symptom of a reaction by the people (our historian notes) took place the very day after the solar prodigy. It was Sunday, the day of the municipal elections. At Leiria, the Catholics got a majority of 750 votes. On the 15th, the Lisbon papers complained of a decline of the “democratic forces” in the whole country. On the 15th, *O Seculo* attributed the Catholic success to the solar prodigy described on the same page. It complained of the great number of abstentions, especially among the “democrats”, and asked if this was not “the Virgin’s fault”?

«The journal *O Dia* compared these elections with those of 1911, and found that the three great parties, “democratic, republican and evolutionist”, had lost ninety-five thousand votes in the capital.»⁴⁴¹

The most fanatical elements within the carbonari were furious at this setback. They wanted to attempt a spectacular operation to ridicule the events of Fatima...⁴⁴²

THE PROFANATION OF OCTOBER 22

At the instigation of the prefect of the district of Santarem, José Antonio dos Reis, a notorious freemason, as were all the functionaries of the regime, some members of the Masonic centre in the village decided to go and vandalize the place of the apparitions.

They arrived at the Cova da Iria during the night of October 22-23,⁴⁴³ demolishing everything that made up the primitive sanctuary. After tearing out the posts of the porch which had been adorned with flowers, they took some objects which had been left there by the piety of the faithful: a table with a little altar on top, a wooden cross, an image of Our Lady and the two lanterns which Maria Carreira made sure were always lighted. They especially wanted to remove the holm-oak of the apparitions. Their task completed, they loaded everything onto their truck and returned to Santarem. Lucy wrote:

«In the morning, news of what had happened spread like wildfire. I ran to the place to see if it were true. But what was my delight to find that the poor men had made a mistake, and that instead of cutting down the holm-oak, they had carried off one of the others growing nearby! I then asked Our Lady to forgive these poor men and I prayed for their conversion.»⁴⁴⁴

What then was the purpose of the operation? To ridicule Fatima, the members of the sect could find nothing better than to organize a parody of a procession. First of all, the stolen objects were displayed in a house in Santarem, with a fee charged for admittance. It is difficult to imagine the kind of hatred one would need to dream up such idiocies! In the evening, a hundred or so marauders paraded in the streets of the village, with the branches of what they took to be the holm-oak of the apparitions, lighted tapers, lanterns, the cross and an image of Our Lady, shouting blasphemous litanies. It was the victory of “Reason” and “Free thought”. Let the reader judge!

In any case, the effect on public opinion was the complete opposite of what had been hoped for. The scorn and indignation of the masses rebounded against the authors of the profanation. Even the “neutral” or “liberal” press was unanimous in disapproval of this action. After describing the sacrilegious parody of October 23, the editor of *O Seculo* concluded severely:

«What a disgrace! How could the authorities permit such goings-on, and refuse to allow Catholic processions, when almost the entire Portuguese population belongs to the Church, and the processions in no way offend the convictions of others?»⁴⁴⁵

The *Diario de Noticias* of October 25 entitled its article, “A Crime”. *A Ordem* also protested. Father Formigao, who was then a professor in the seminary of Santarem, distributed a vehement protest, which he had composed in the name of the Catholics of the city. He condemned the scandalous impudence of this «handful of carbonari», whom he likened to «a pus in the social organism», who dared to profane «the venerable cross of the Redeemer», and «the august image of the Virgin, who in all periods of our history has presided over the destiny of our nation.»⁴⁴⁶

In the end, this violent and clumsy counter-blow by the lodges, far from harming the great movement of faith raised up by Fatima, only showed how deep this movement was. It even contributed to its increase! Since violence did not work, something else had to be found...

THE GREAT CONGRESS OF FREE THOUGHT

A little more than a month after the odious spectacle of Santarem, José do Vale, a fanatical atheist who managed the journal *O Mundo* at Lisbon, decided to put an end to the apparitions at Fatima. This time, however, peaceful means were chosen: a great congress of protest «against the clerico-mercantile speculation going on at Fatima», «on the very site chosen by the reactionaries as the theatre of their shameful attempt at retrogradation (sic).» A profusion of tracts was distributed all around Fatima to invite “the liberal people” to gather outside the Sunday Mass. Various orators of repute attempted to unmask the impostors of the Cova da Iria.⁴⁴⁷

Alerted by the tracts, Father Ferreira wisely announced that Mass would be celebrated that Sunday in the chapel of Our Lady of Ortiga, about one mile from Fatima. As for the three little seers, Ti Marto took them to Caneiro, where they attended Mass in the chapel of the castle.⁴⁴⁸

What a setback for the organizers of the great popular Congress! Before the locked doors of the church, José do Vale, the Tinsmith and the three delegates

from Lisbon for the “association of the civil register” did not need much time to count their audience: there was Francisco da Silva, a “militant democrat”, who for this reason had been named Regedor of the parish, and then... two other members of the congress. Eight true-blue republicans, counting everybody!

What were they to do? After some conferring, they decided to go nevertheless to the Cova da Iria. Gendarmes from Leiria, Torres Novas, and Vila Nova de Ourem, who had been brought out especially for the occasion, accompanied them to the Cova.

Here is the comical account Maria Carreira gave to Father de Marchi:

«It was decided at last to go to the Cova da Iria on a forced pilgrimage, and here at least there was no lack of an audience. A man from Lomba de Egua had even prepared a magnificent reception. Assembling a variety of donkeys he tied them to the trees and on the arrival of the “protest meeting” from Fatima, placed under the nose of each a certain liquid which caused them to bray with exceeding loudness to the great embarrassment of the visitors.

«Another surprise awaited them on the arrival at the holm-oak tree, now little more than a root. Fodder, the customary food of beasts, had been placed there for their reception!

«We did it to annoy them (Maria Carreira said), and they knew it. When I arrived at 11:30 with two of my neighbours, we hid near the place where the Chapel of Penance was built. Higher up, three men climbed up a holm-oak tree. Then someone began to preach against religion and every time he said something particularly bad, we answered: “Blessed be Jesus and Mary.” A lad from Quinta de Cardiga who was perched up in a tree on the other side also said in a loud voice: “Blessed be Jesus and Mary”, and made a salute with his hat. They were so furious that they sent two guards down to us but we ran away through the trees and they lost sight of us.

«Then the lads and men who had been to Mass at the Ortiga chapel arrived and, seeing what was happening at the Cova da Iria, began to shout out at the speakers and the guards: “Fools! Beasts! etc., etc.” And they shouted back: “Country bumpkins, fools, too!” The guards tried again to catch them but not one did they get! We all ran away whenever we could and laughing

at them as hard as we could. After a bit they all went in the direction of Fatima village and we never saw or heard anything of them again!»⁴⁴⁹

Since he could not claim victory after such a fiasco, José do Vale, in *O Mundo* of December 4, had to be satisfied with congratulating the courageous orators of free thought, while waxing ironic about the poor people, turned into fanatics and led astray by the clergy.

«This article (writes Costa Brochado) was like the swan song of free thought, for at this very hour Sidonio Pais was approaching the park of Edward VII, as head of the cadets of the school of war, to insert an interlude of light and peace into the calamitous course of the regime.» The Tinsmith, who was despised by the whole population, was soon relieved of his functions and replaced at the head of the Council of Vila de Ourem. All his scheming had been in vain, and the pilgrimage to Fatima would soon be able to continue its development.

*«AN EXTRAORDINARY HELP»: THE GOVERNMENT OF SIDONIO PAIS
(DECEMBER 8, 1917 - DECEMBER 14, 1918)*

After seven years of violent and fanatical persecution, after a century of being banned from public life, as if by a miracle, the Church suddenly recovered all its liberties which it had a right to, and needed, to fulfil its work of saving souls. The event is particularly remarkable since the man who put an end to this long situation of injustice – and with great decision and rapidity, since it was all accomplished in a year! – had no clerical affiliations at all.

Sidonio Pais had been a professor at Coimbra and a commander in the army. Before becoming Minister of State, he had been ambassador to Berlin until March, 1916. A member of the Unionist Party of Brito Comacho, he was known to be a die-hard republican and connected with Freemasonry.

Sidonio Pais decided to put an end to the anarchy which was leading his country to disaster. Having rallied around him some of the saner forces of the Republic, he led a *coup d'état* to salvage Portugal. Launched on December 5, his revolution «against the demagoguery of the democrats» was immediately welcomed by public opinion. The historians of Fatima have not failed to point out a happy coincidence. It was on December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of Portugal, which that year fell precisely on a Saturday, that the

national uprising obtained its definitive victory. The French historian Albert-Alain Bourdon, who hardly had the solemnity of the Heavenly Patroness in mind, wrote: «Sidonio Pais triumphed over his adversaries on December 8. He decreed the dissolution of Parliament, and had himself named by a revolutionary junta President of the Republic and head of the dictatorial government.»⁴⁵⁰

There then opened a completely new era for Portugal, a wonderful surprise for Catholics. Making a clean break with republican jacobinism, Sidonio Pais immediately wished to return to the Church all her liberties, and restore the best national traditions. Is it not astonishing that this former high-ranking freemason considered reconciliation of the political power with the Church his most urgent and important task?

LIBERATING LAWS. Since that time, measures tending to compensate the Church for the wrongs she suffered in the revolution of 1910 followed each other almost uninterruptedly. On December 9, the very day after his victory, Sidonio Pais lifted all sanctions taken against the bishops, who were thus enabled to return from exile. On December 22, a decree suppressed the prohibition of worship in religious edifices which the State had appropriated. On February 22, other dispositions of the law of separation that were harmful to the Church were abolished. By February of 1918, the bishops, who were now free to meet at Lisbon, could write to Pope Benedict XV that the situation was improving.⁴⁵¹

«On May 15, Sidonio Pais attended a solemn service in the Cathedral of Lisbon for the soldiers who died in the war. He was warmly congratulated by the bishop who preached the sermon.» By these kinds of gestures, making a clean break with the sectarianism of his immediate predecessors, the new head of State fearlessly demonstrated the new orientation of his policy.

In a few months, the founder of the «Republica Nova» (New Republic), which already foreshadows the «Estado Novo» (New State) of Salazar, managed to re-establish an honest and strong government, capable of standing up to England. This fact enraged the freethinking historian, Gerard de Sede. Sidonio Pais was very popular. Little by little he revived the soul of the nation, openly renewing its great Catholic tradition.

Along this line, he wanted to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican without delay. On June 28, 1918, a communiqué announced the reconciliation of the Republic with Rome. On July 4, the Pope congratulated Sidonio Pais and his

government, and on July 10 there could be read in the official Journal the decree re-establishing the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, while Msgr. Locatelli was named nuncio at Lisbon.

TOWARDS A CATHOLIC NATIONALISM? Fortified by the support of the majority of the nation, the one-man-ruler pursued his work imperturbably, to the great fury of his former comrades, the freemasons: «Commander Pais will give the Republic to the Jesuits!» exclaimed José do Vale. «The churches are reopening!» And in fact, Sidonio Pais was not content with letting several religious congregations return to the country; he was preparing a law which would restore all rights to the Society of Jesus.

This time he had gone too far. Already the Masonic sect had decided on his ruin. Sidonio Pais, who was aware of the anticlerical rage of his adversaries, no doubt expected reprisals, but he kept an intrepid courage. Costa Brochado, the Portuguese historian, reports this astonishing testimony: «One of his police officers, the trusty Lieutenant Faria, told me one day that Sidonio Pais considered himself protected by the Blessed Virgin, and that at the end of his life he had “encouraging visions” which gave him an irresistible power.» After questioning those who knew the leader intimately, Brochado attributes to Pais open desires of conversion to Catholicism. This is quite plausible; otherwise it would be difficult to explain why this former freemason would have the courage to conduct such an openly Catholic policy so resolutely.

On December 6, 1918, there was a first attempt on his life, which he narrowly escaped. After that the police dared to raid the central seat of Freemasonry. It was now open warfare and the sect, which felt dangerously threatened, waited no more than eight days to renew the assassination attempt against a leader who was too far-seeing, too popular, and capable of destroying its age-old domination over the country.

On December 14, he attended a Mass on a minesweeper for soldiers who had died in combat. He then had to travel to one of the provinces. «Warned not to take the train because he was going to be assassinated, he declared that a head of State should not change his movements for motives of this nature. Shot right in the train station of Rossio in Lisbon, he died on the operating table at Saint Joseph’s Hospital, with a crucifix on his chest, which had been ravaged by the bullets.»⁴⁵²

The hour of national salvation had not yet struck. But the sacrifice of the courageous head of State was not without fruit, for the essence of his work remained. Although after his assassination the country fell right back into political anarchy, the republicans who soon returned to power did not have the strength to reactivate the anticlerical laws. Thanks to Sidonio Pais, the persecutions had ceased, the Church had recovered her liberty, and in spite of some unsuccessful attempts to take it away again, she kept it.

Twenty years later, in a discourse recalling the tragic death of Sidonio Pais – «the blood of a President was shed, a President who quickly passed on like a great hope» – Cardinal Cerejeira could declare: «Since Our Lady of Fatima appeared in the skies of Portugal in 1917, a special blessing of God has descended on the land of Portugal. The violent cycle of religious persecution has stopped and a new epoch of pacification of consciences and Christian restoration has opened.»⁴⁵³

CHAPTER II

THE PILGRIMAGE OF FATIMA AT THE SOURCES OF THE PORTUGUESE RENEWAL (1918 - 1926)

While the Church suddenly recovered its liberty of action as if by a miracle, another miracle, discreet and hidden, but even more important, was beginning to take place in the recesses of men's hearts. Under the influence of the pilgrimage which was spontaneously organized and developed, the profound conversion of the whole people was effected little by little, restoring to the Church a force and vitality which had long been lost. As Father Paul Denis observes: «In truth, a new element had overturned everything. At first it was imperceptible, then striking, as decisive as a change of current in the sails of a triple-masted ship. After several centuries of lethargy, the Church in Portugal regained its self-confidence. And this confidence was born of the simple fact that Portuguese Catholics, responding to the appeal of Our Lady, made the pilgrimage to Fatima over and over again. These enormous pulsations, the regular flow of an entire people back and forth from Fatima, played an essential role in the religious restoration of Portugal. Little by little the former inferiority complex was replaced by an attitude of pride, a beautiful and joyous assurance in the Church and in themselves...»⁴⁵⁴

Before describing this wonderful Catholic restoration, before relating the story of how after 1926, Portugal emerged from its political and social chaos to enjoy – right in the middle of the twentieth century – forty years of peaceful living in Christendom, we must first go back to the initial years in which the event of Fatima, thanks to the Blessed Virgin, little by little imposed itself as a national event. For if the unquestionable religious renewal which Portugal experienced from 1917 to the 1960s is due in the first place to Fatima, the most enlightened minds, and first of all the president, Salazar, recognized that without Fatima, national restoration would not have been possible at all. This statement, Father Denis continues, «is considered obvious by an almost unanimous majority of the Portuguese: only the new atmosphere created by Fatima made the work of political recovery, and national and social reconstruction, possible and relatively easy...»⁴⁵⁵ So true is this that as we shall see, the progressive development of the pilgrimage went hand in hand with the conversion of the nation and its political

recovery. Thus it is a threefold history which we must recount: the pilgrimage, the religious renaissance, and finally the political and social recovery of the nation.

I. THE SPONTANEOUS PILGRIMAGE: 1917 1920

THE HEROIC YEARS: A SHOWER OF GRACES AND MIRACLES

Just as in the Gospel, for the most part it was the poor people, peasants and rural inhabitants, who were the first to hear the message of Heaven. Here is the most informed testimony, that of Maria Carreira, a believer in Fatima from day one:

«After the day on which the sun danced, there was an endless procession of people here, especially on Sunday afternoons and on the 13th of each month.

«There were people from hereabouts and people from other parts. The men came with their sticks and a bundle on their shoulders, and the women carried their children and there were even old people with very little strength. They all knelt near the tree where Our Lady had appeared and no one seemed weary or tired. Here nothing was sold, not a cup of water or wine – nothing! Oh, what good times those were for penance! We often wept with emotion.» (It was in fact with tears running down her cheeks that Maria Carreira told us about those first pilgrimages of which she holds such happy memories.)

«Here there were many tears and prayers for Our Lady, and when there were plenty of people we sang our favourite hymns. What wonderful times those were!... *People did so much penance, and all with great joy.* I think if I had died in those times, Our Lady would have taken me straight to Heaven. Now it's over and I can't help longing for those days!

«One day a woman from Alcanena came on pilgrimage, and she could not restrain her tears! “Ah, Fatima! Ah, Fatima!” she said... “There is so much religion here! All one can say about where I live is that there is no religion!... They have even burned down the church, along with all the images of the saints!” Poor woman!

«Everyone went home happy! *They had come to ask Our Lady for miracles*

and She always heard their prayers. In those days I can't remember anyone saying that Our Lady had refused a miracle. All who came, came with faith or found it here.

«One day a man who had come a long way was soaked with rain. I went to him and asked him if he felt any ill effects. “No”, he answered, “I am quite all right and have never passed such a happy night as this. I have come eleven leagues and yet I don't feel at all tired. I am so happy in this place.” Apart from the rain, it was very cold, being winter, and the man had passed the whole night in the open air, because in those days there was no shelter here.»⁴⁵⁶

Already the Rosary was being recited almost uninterruptedly on the spot of the apparitions. Encouraged by the shower of graces which Our Lady was pouring down so profusely on all the pilgrims, drawn irresistibly by the gentle, invisible presence which was felt in this blessed place, the flow of the faithful who hastened to the Cova da Iria continued to swell, although the Church authorities all the while said nothing.

THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST SANCTUARY

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CAPELINHA: AUGUST 1918. On October 13, 1917, the Most Holy Virgin had clearly expressed Her desire: «*I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in My honour. I am Our Lady of the Rosary.*» Since that time the months had passed, and the parish priest hardly seemed concerned about fulfilling the modest request of the Queen of Heaven.

But Her devout pilgrims, and especially the ardent Maria Carreira, were afflicted by this omission. We have already said how in spite of herself, since August 13, 1917, Maria Carreira became the custodian of all gifts left as offerings at the Cova da Iria.⁴⁵⁷

«Every day she gathered the money into a little bag, and sold the corn bread, the little white bread, the baskets of potatoes or peas, everything that the women had brought to the Virgin of Fatima, in thanksgiving for graces obtained or the fulfilment of promises.»⁴⁵⁸

Soon, the evil tongues began to murmur: «Naturally, the Carreiras are pocketing

the money! Look at how the daughters of Maria Carreira have nice dresses now! Before long they will have shoes!»

Maria Carreira recalls:

«That made me angry, and I went to find the parish priest to tell him: “Father, would you be so good as to take responsibility for the alms? I do not want to continue this way with all these persecutions!...” Then Father led me into his office, and read to me a letter from the Patriarch, which said that the money had to be kept carefully in a trustworthy house, but not at the house of the seers’ parents, until a new order was given. This time I went back to my house with more courage.»⁴⁵⁹

Later on, the Tinsmith – deprived of his post under Sidonio Pais, he had recovered it when the republicans returned to power – as well as the Regedor of the parish would try to lay hands on Our Lady’s money. But our peasants were too clever: to head off such threatening covetousness, one fine day Maria Carreira pretended to be in the greatest distress. “My money from the Cova da Iria has been stolen”, she wailed! The word spread quickly, and so she felt more at ease. Here is her account:

«Some time passed, and when I saw that there was no more danger from the authorities in Ourem, I went to the priest and asked for his permission to begin building the chapel. I told him that we intended to put the statue of Our Lady in it and the gifts that the people brought which (in the past) were often spoiled by the rain. Father Ferreira answered as if he didn’t care one way or the other and finally said that he didn’t want to have anything to do with it. “If we build it with the money we have, shall we be doing anything wrong?” “I don’t think so”, he replied. He spoke like this because he didn’t want it to be said later that he had ordered the chapel to be built. He had orders from the Cardinal Patriarch not to take any part in the affair.

«For myself, I had heard enough and I went home happy. I told everything to my Manuel and he went and spoke to Lucy’s father because he was the owner of the land. Antonio dos Santos gave his permission and said we could make it any size we liked...

«The chapel took more than a month to build and everyone wanted to have a finger in the pie. Some wanted it one way, some another. Each one had his

own idea, the more so because no priest would have anything to do with it. It became so difficult that I went and spoke to the mason, who was a man from Santa Catherina, a very good religious man and skilful at his work. “Don’t worry about it, woman”, he said to me. “If this is God’s work, there’s bound to be trouble at the beginning.” It was a dear little chapel when it was finished but it was not much more than a depository because it had nothing inside. No priest would come and bless it and it was only much later that this was done by Father Marques dos Santos. It had a little covered balcony in front, very tiny – with six people it was full. It was later enlarged to the size it is today.»⁴⁶⁰

MAY, 1920: THE FIRST STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA. Scarcely one month after the completion of the Capelinha, a merchant from Torres Novas, Gilberto Fernandes dos Santos, came to see Maria Carreira. He was very upset, because he had promised Our Lady to give all the funds necessary for the building of the first chapel at the Cova da Iria, but now it was already finished. Maria da Capelinha, as she was now called, then had a very felicitous idea: she suggested that he offer a statue to be placed there. He went home satisfied, determined to ask for the advice of his parish priest. One week later the matter was settled. The priest went over to the Fanzeres studio of Braga, which entrusted the work to a young sculptor, José Ferreira Thedim. As Maria Carreira recalls, Gilberto «returned to Fatima several times with the artist to question the children. Father Formigao, who was very friendly with the families of Ti Marto and Maria Rosa, accompanied them. At this time, Jacinta had not yet left for the hospital at Lisbon. Nevertheless, it was still quite a while before the work was begun...»⁴⁶¹

In the first few days of May, 1920, the work was finally completed and dispatched by train to the generous donor from Torres Novas. It was a beautiful statue of painted wood which quickly became very dear to popular devotion. Lightly retouched by the artist in 1951 or 1952, it is still venerated at the Capelinha, and thus remains our most moving souvenir of the first days of the pilgrimage.⁴⁶²

In the year 1920, May 13 coincided with the feast of the Ascension. It was decided to take advantage of the concourse of pilgrims to install the new statue in the Capelinha. However, they had not counted on the tyranny of the authorities of the Republic, who would not hear of it. At Torres Novas, the statue was already attracting the curious and people filed into the donor’s house where

it was displayed. What would it cause in the Cova da Iria, then? The Administrator of Torres Novas contacted Gilberto and forbade him to transport it to Fatima. For greater security, a group of soldiers guarded the house... no doubt without any enthusiasm, for this is what happened:

«On May 12, the donor's father yoked together a pair of oxen and began loading the tools and various materials into his cart, as though he was going to work in the fields. He placed a chest there. But the soldiers, who saw nothing suspicious in this placid looking team of oxen, let it pass. When the cart was outside the village, some friends who were waiting placed the chest into an automobile and took it over to the parish church in Fatima.»⁴⁶³

With the authorization of Father Moreira, who was temporarily placed in charge of the parish of Fatima, the statue was blessed by the archpriest of Torres Novas, who at the time was with his family in the hamlet of Montelo, near Fatima.⁴⁶⁴

THE CONFRONTATION OF MAY 13, 1920

A false rumour was circulating (spread by whom?) that for May 13, Jacinta's body would be transported from her tomb at Vila Nova de Ourem to Fatima. The authorities had also gotten wind of the installation of the statue in the Capelinha, planned for the same day. An enormous concourse of pilgrims was expected as well.

This spectacular new demonstration in honour of Our Lady enraged the sectarians. They decided to prevent it at any price. Did the initiative come from below or from above? The fact is that the Tinsmith could exhibit orders in this sense coming from the cabinet of the interior minister! Not everything is clear in this affair in which, to mobilize the necessary forces, they undoubtedly were not afraid of spreading a few falsehoods. In any case, the prohibition of the gathering at the Cova da Iria took on the proportions of an affair of state!⁴⁶⁵

On May 6, having summoned all the officials of his territory, the Tinsmith exposed the enormous danger Fatima presented to the Republic! His secretary at that time, Mr. Julio Lopes, who did not share his sectarianism at all, described it later on:

«When word began to spread that a great pilgrimage to Fatima was in the

making, Artur de Oliveira Santos declared: “I want to put an end to this masquerade!” “You will do nothing of the kind!” I answered him. “I will mobilize all the artillery! Nobody will pass! Against force there is no resistance!” I well knew, added Julio Lopes, that there was a foolish idea!»⁴⁶⁶

The following year, in his first work on the apparitions of Fatima, Father Formigao wrote a fascinating account of this memorable day. We can hardly do better than quote at length from this irreplaceable document. It lets us understand the atmosphere of the time perfectly. Along with a profound and enthusiastic piety for Our Lady of Fatima, there was the elation of pride rediscovered, and obvious satisfaction in daring to defy the foolish orders of the tyrannical freemasons:

«I arrived at Vila Nova de Ourem early in the morning on May 13 last. It was pouring with rain and a thunderstorm was in progress at the same time. When I left Lisbon, there were alarming rumours about Fatima, and people said that it was useless to attempt to go there because there were official orders to prevent transit through Vila Nova de Ourem. For this reason, many people who had arranged to come with me did not in fact leave Lisbon, but I took a chance on it and came to see for myself how much truth there was in the reports.

«On arrival I saw two ladies, one young and attractive and the other older but distinguished looking, both of whom I knew slightly. Poor things! In that torrential rain I was reminded of the verse in Genesis: *Et apertae sunt cataractarum aquarum et fontes abyssi magni*. But they did not complain and were full of faith and enthusiasm. Their only fear seemed to be that they might be prevented from arriving at the place of the Apparitions.

«With great difficulty we made our way to a little inn in front of the church, and there we rested until daybreak because it was quite impossible to get rooms.

«Very early in the morning, we heard a troop of horses passing, and ran to the window where we saw a squadron of cavalry of the Republican Guard which was proceeding at a gallop in the direction of Fatima. The rumours were not, then, without foundation. We asked a servant what was in the air but received the same reply. Nothing but rumours... rumours. That there

were infantry, cavalry, machine-guns and I know not what besides. A general offensive seemed to be in progress, but against what, in the name of God! No one knew, said the woman. One thing was certain: from Ourem no one could go to Fatima. Transport was available and in great demand at \$40.00 a cart, but all were eventually dispensed with to the intense annoyance of the owners, good Republicans all, but unable to see why peaceful citizens should be prohibited from an excursion which suited them so well.

«In Tomar, it seemed, the same prohibition was in force, also in several other districts whose authorities had forbidden the departure of vehicles.

«While we were talking, a young man, owner of a printing press in Lisbon, and shortly afterwards Dr. da Fonseca, a lawyer, who was defending a client in the local court, came up to us. We asked them if they knew anything. No more than we did apparently. People were being allowed to go as far as Fatima but no further. At about that time the rain stopped and I went out into the road where I watched the passage of carts and cars, lorries, foot-folk and horsemen – a regular excursion!

«I wondered to what purpose all the prohibitions had been. I had expected to see nobody and yet here was this constant stream of men, women and children.

«There were huge char-a-bancs drawn by mules, filled with people roaring with laughter, laughing apparently at the Mayor whom I could see in the middle of the road looking uncomfortable in a straw hat with a forced smile on his lips. There were carts decorated with flowers... motor cars blowing their horns, grand looking carriages, modest dog carts... men and women on foot, soaked to the skin and covered with mud, dripping with water but happy, smiling. All this unfolded before me like a long cinema film. Where did all these people come from? From all parts but mostly from Torres Novas I was told. And what was the Mayor doing flitting about in his straw hat? What new development was about to unfold? It was all most entertaining!

«I wanted to go to Fatima with all speed but there was Mass to be thought of. I asked what time it was said in the church and was told at eleven. After Mass, I lunched in great haste and set off on the steep road which winds

uphill from Ourem to Fatima.

«Coming the other way was a car travelling fast in which I caught a glimpse of rifles, fanning out menacingly. It was the Mayor and his escort! “He’s up to no good”, observed a lad pedalling uphill on a bicycle. After climbing for an hour and a half we neared Fatima and the rain began to fall again. At last we entered the little square facing the church. Everywhere we saw carts, carriages and cars parked. A great crowd of people, numbering thousands, was blocking the square and the church. In the middle of the road a force of infantry and cavalry of the Republican Guard was preventing the people from passing and completing the remaining two miles which separate Fatima from the Cova. I asked some bystanders whether anyone had in fact passed. Until midday, I was told, everyone had gone through but then the Mayor had arrived and forbidden it. I asked the commandant whether one might go through but he informed me politely that he had allowed people to pass until the Mayor had given orders to the contrary. He was very sorry but he had to obey orders. I went back and mingled with the enormous crowd which was gathered inside the church and in the porch sadly commenting on the affair and unable to understand what threat to public order could possibly exist in the Cova da Iria and not in Fatima since the people were the same. It was perfectly ridiculous, everyone agreed.

«Many people tried to get through the fields without being seen, climbing walls and other obstacles, and managed to arrive at the place of the Apparitions, counting themselves fortunate to kneel there and say the Rosary. Perhaps it was this which put the Government in peril!

«Inside the church at Fatima, Father Cruz was delivering sermons and leading the Rosary, while many people were going to Confession. A blind woman who had come at the cost of much sacrifice from Aveiro was leaning on the arm of a friend in the pouring rain which had begun again. She made no complaint, but on the contrary entrusted herself with great faith to God and began walking towards the church. A bearded individual, who told me he was a doctor, was explaining the providential reasons for the prohibition to a crowd which had gathered round him. According to him, people had begun to turn the place into a sort of fair with music, etc., and obviously Our Lady did not want this. She had appeared in a deserted place precisely because She wanted to be loved and venerated in spirit and truth, without accompaniments more reminiscent of the less edifying *festas*,

etc., etc. Prayer and penance, this and this alone was what She wanted, therefore by this prohibition the authorities were all unconsciously satisfying the desires of Our Lady!

«The rain began to fall torrentially again and everyone tried to find shelter underneath carts or in the porch of the church which was already crammed to capacity.

«At this moment I saw the Republican Guard dealing out blows right and left on some peaceful peasants who were sadly surveying the scene from under their umbrellas. Surprised by the entirely unexpected attack they fled without knowing why they had been set upon. Somebody went up to the guards to ask the reason for this. They complained that a man had tried to force a way through and that when they prevented him he threatened them and in the confusion that followed the innocent suffered with the guilty, as is the way of the world.

«After this explanation, and order having been restored, I began to talk to some peasants and prudently advised them not to make any attempt to pass, adding that there would be great merit in obeying orders however unjust, provided there was nothing against conscience in doing so. Then one of the guards said to me with the utmost sincerity:

«“If you only knew, sir, how I dislike this duty. I obey orders because I have to, but believe me, I hate it in my heart. I am religious myself and I cannot understand why these poor people should be prevented from going to the Cova to pray. It’s enough to upset a man. I have a sister whose life was saved by Our Lady of Fatima!”

«As he said this a drop of water rolled down his cheek, most certainly not from the rain which poured and dripped from his waterproof hood.

«After this I went to the presbytery whose veranda, designed in the old Portuguese style, was being assaulted by those trying to find shelter from the weather. Here I saw one of the ladies who had been my companions in the morning, and she confided to me in a whisper that she was going to find her way to the Cova by a secret path through the fields. I saw her set off in the soaking rain and mud, delighted at the idea that she was going to get the better of the modern Herods in the Government.

«At last our coachman warned us that the road was bad and that we ought to leave soon. We performed our last devotions, said our farewells and returned to Ourem and thence to our home.

«At the station, while we were waiting for the train, we met many people from different parts of the country who were returning home as we were. We saw the blind lady from Aveiro with a companion from Oporto, both of whom, in spite of being soaked to the skin, and in poor health, were none the less in splendid spirits. I saw a friend who was a jeweller in Lisbon and many other people from the capital...»⁴⁶⁷

Now here is the account which Sister Lucy has left us of the same day. Faced with such unusual events, she certainly did not have the detached attitude Father Formigao could take. Such a deployment of armed forces and so many threats against her would ordinarily strongly shake up a thirteen-year-old child. Her calmness on this occasion is worth noting. It demonstrates an uncommon courage and equilibrium:

«Some time later, on May 13th, I don't remember whether it was in 1918 or 1919, news went round at dawn that cavalrymen were in Fatima to prevent the people from going to the Cova da Iria. Everybody was alarmed, and came to give me the news, assuring me that without any doubt this was to be the last day of my life. Without taking this news too seriously, I set out for the church. When I reached Fatima, I passed between the horses which were all over the church grounds, and went into the church. I heard a Mass celebrated by a priest I did not know, received Holy Communion, made my thanksgiving, and went back home without anyone saying a single word to me. I don't know whether it was because they did not see me, or that they did not think me worthy of notice.

«News kept coming in that the troops were trying in vain to keep people away from the Cova da Iria. In spite of this, I went there, too, to recite the Rosary. On the way I was joined by a group of women who had come from a distance. As we drew near the place, two cavalrymen gave their horses a smart crack of the whip and advanced at full speed towards the group. They pulled up beside us and asked where we were going. The women boldly replied that "it was none of their business". They whipped the horses again, as though they meant to charge forward and trample us all underfoot. The women ran in all directions and, a moment later, I found myself alone with

the two cavalrymen. They then asked me my name, and I gave it without hesitation. They next asked if I were the seer, and I said I was. They ordered me to step out on to the middle of the road between the two horses, and proceed in the direction of Fatima...

«When we reached a plot of ground that lies on the outskirts of Aljustrel, where there was a small spring, and some trenches dug for planting vines, they called a halt, and said to one another, probably in order to frighten me: “Here are some open trenches. Let’s cut off her head with one of our swords, and leave her here dead and buried. Then we’ll be finished with this business once and for all.” When I heard these words, I thought that my last moment had really come, but I was as much at peace as if it did not concern me at all. After a minute or two during which they seemed to be thinking it over, the other replied: “No, we have no authority to do such a thing.”

«They ordered me to keep on going. So I went straight through our little village, until I arrived at my parents’ house. All the neighbours were at the windows and doors of their houses to see what was going on. Some were laughing and making fun of me, others lamenting my sorry plight. When we reached my home, they ordered me to call my parents, but they were not at home. One of them dismounted and went to see if my parents were hiding inside. He searched the house, but found no one; whereupon he gave orders for me to stay indoors for the rest of the day. Then he mounted his horse and they both rode off.

«Late in the afternoon, news went round that the troops had withdrawn, defeated by the people. At sunset, I was praying my Rosary in the Cova da Iria, accompanied by hundreds of people. While I was under arrest, according to what we heard later, some persons went to tell my mother what was happening, and she replied: “If it’s true that she saw Our Lady, Our Lady will defend her; and if she’s lying, it will serve her right to be punished.” And she remained at peace as before.»⁴⁶⁸ (In a letter of April 14, 1927, Lucy would remind her mother of this.)

«The Portuguese Federation of Free Thought» could congratulate its zealous representative at the Administrator’s office in Vila Nova de Ourem. In vain the Tinsmith gave it his assurance that in fact «on May 13 the forces of reaction suffered... a severe blow which reduced to naught the projected

demonstration.»⁴⁶⁹ The prevailing opinion was that the pilgrimage, with its thousands of faithful who had come from all parts, notwithstanding all the obstacles raised by the government, had been a new victory of popular faith against the stupid tyranny of the government officials. The latter once again were covered with ridicule.⁴⁷⁰

Although the sectarians were powerless against the mass of pilgrims, they could nevertheless get their revenge by destroying the statue. Since the situation still appeared menacing, it was prudently left in the sacristy of the parish.

«We were so afraid of some profanation (says Maria da Capela) but at the same time we were longing to be able to venerate a statue of Our Lady in the very place where She had appeared. One day Gilberto came and said that he thought it would be a good idea to put a veil over the niche so that people would think that the statue was already there. Then we could see if anything untoward happened. So I put a towel over the niche and everyone thought that Our Lady was behind it. Nothing at all happened. So Gilberto brought the statue and put it in the niche (on June 13, 1920).

«Months passed and there began to be new rumours that the statue was to be stolen and the chapel burned down. So we thought it would be better to take the statue to my home and bring it to the chapel every morning. It must have been about the end of October when my husband brought Our Lady to our home in Moita. We arranged a little altar in the sitting-room and put the statue on it with two oil lamps burning.»⁴⁷¹

As we will see, this prudent precaution was far from being in vain.

II. 1920: FINALLY A BISHOP!

THE UNOFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE PILGRIMAGE AND ITS WONDERFUL DEVELOPMENT (1920-1926)

At the moment the government was striving mightily, but in vain, to oppose the pilgrimage which was now in full swing, an event of the greatest importance took place. On this event would depend the future of Fatima. On May 15, 1920, Pope Benedict XV finally gave a Pastor to the diocese of Leiria, juridically restored more than two years before! Bishop da Silva was consecrated on July

25 in the Cathedral of Porto, and solemnly took possession of his See of Leiria on August 5.⁴⁷²

Bishop da Silva was a highly cultured man. He was distinguished for his profound piety and his great love for the Blessed Virgin. He had a special devotion for Our Lady of Lourdes, having already gone there twelve times on pilgrimage. On August 15, 1920, ten days after his enthronement, he solemnly consecrated his diocese to the Blessed Virgin.

What did he think of the events of Fatima at the time? He himself later confided the answer to Canon Barthas:

«At first I did not want to be bothered with it, to the point – you will not believe this – that I did not even know where Fatima was. When the apostolic Nuncio called me to propose reconstructing the diocese of Leiria, I hesitated strongly. Judge for yourselves the state of the so-called diocese; in this village (Leiria) there is just one priest! To encourage me, His Grace the Bishop of Portalegre said to me: “You have Fatima, a new Lourdes!” “Oh, that means yet one more trouble”, I told him. All in all I was incredulous. However, once I had accepted my responsibilities, I resolved to wait on Providence for the signs which would guide my conduct.»⁴⁷³

First, he desired to be informed. On September 15, 1920, he received Father Formigao who explained to him the urgent necessity of coming to a decision.⁴⁷⁴ Father Faustino, dean of Olival, intervened in the same sense. But other tasks absorbed the new bishop: on October 30, he reopened a seminary at Leiria, with thirty students.

THE PURCHASE OF THE LAND AND THE FIRST AUTHORIZATIONS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Finally, after a year of waiting, during which he was able to listen to the most varied opinions, the bishop formed his own opinion, which was decisively in favour of the apparitions. In June, 1921, he made sure that Lucy was removed from Aljustrel to assure her formation in the college of Vilar at Porto.⁴⁷⁵

At the same time, he decided to take under his surveillance the spontaneous cult that was proceeding at the Cova da Iria without any control by the clergy. On

September 12, 1921, he himself went to Fatima for the first time. There he recited the Rosary at the Cova da Iria, and he met some of the local peasants, some of whom had already donated lands they possessed at the Cova da Iria and the vicinity. The faithful Maria Carreira was able to give him the substantial sum of money kept by her since August, 1917. Two days later, September 14, the acts of the donation or sale were signed before a notary.⁴⁷⁶

On October 13, the people celebrated the fourth anniversary of the last apparition. With the permission of His Grace, the chapel was finally blessed by Canon Marques dos Santos, and Mass was celebrated for the first time. From then on, the bishop permitted the celebration of a «low Mass with sermon on days of great concourse of pilgrims».⁴⁷⁷

A MIRACULOUS WELL?

One month later, an unexpected solution was found to the difficult problem of water. On September 12, the good bishop had realized on the spot the urgent necessity of remedying the lack of water:

«I asked the villagers (Bishop da Silva recounted later) how the pilgrims were managing to obtain water for their drinking and washing. They told me that it was a cause of disputes between the pilgrims and the villagers, because the villagers refused to allow their wells to be emptied. I told them, I do not want members of my diocese arguing among themselves, especially regarding the Most Holy Virgin. And I asked the ever devoted Mr. Carreira to dig out a well at the lowest part of the ground which forms the Cova.»⁴⁷⁸

His Grace's order could not be obeyed until November 9, 1921, when the digging began.⁴⁷⁹ Maria Carreira has left a charming account:

«At the beginning, the men thought of digging the well at the foot of the fig tree, eighty metres from the Capelinha, the little chapel. But finally the idea of José Alves was adopted. Father Marques dos Santos, the parish priest of Santa Catarina, and the archpriest of Olival were there. "In my opinion", said José Alves, "we will never dig a well here!" "In that case, where?" asked the archpriest. "There!..." and José Alves showed them the place where the Cova would be at its deepest point. "Even if there is no rain for a

month or more”, he said, “here there is always some dampness and a few reeds.” Later he had the habit of saying with pride: “Yes, this is the place where they dug the well, by my will and good pleasure!”

«But, after only half a day of hard work, they were obstructed by stone. “Now what are we going to do?” asked the priests. “Now, we will blow out the stone!... I will immediately get the necessary tools.” Before they got their tools, all by itself, plenty of water appeared. But the well stayed unfinished and uncovered. It stayed like that until the next year.»

«“Did the water come miraculously?” asked Father de Marchi. This was in any case the impression of the local inhabitants and also of the pilgrims, who came in greater and greater numbers to draw water from the providential well. Certainly on this dry land no one could have expected to find water so easily.

«“They would come here”, relates the good José Alves, “with bottles and urns that were filled and brought back home for the sick to drink or to wash their wounds. Everybody had great confidence in that water, and Our Lady, as a reward, would make the pain disappear and their wounds heal. *Never did Our Lady work so many miracles as at that time...*”

«“Many came here – it was pitiful – with pus running down their legs. They would wash themselves and leave their dressing there, because Our Lady healed them. Others knelt down to drink this muddy water, and felt themselves healed of their internal pains.”

«One could say (comments Father de Marchi) that the Most Holy Virgin, in Her Motherly tenderness, was playfully making sport of men with their precepts of hygiene, accomplishing miraculous prodigies with means that, humanly speaking, could only have been a cause of infection and complications.»⁴⁸⁰

1922: A NEW YEAR OF GRACES

From this time on, the felicitous events marking the growth in devotion to Our Lady of Fatima followed each other almost uninterruptedly. The final efforts of the sectarians to place an obstacle to this great, irresistible movement also contributed to these events...

MARCH 6, 1922: THE CAPELINHA DYNAMITED. «During the night of

March 5-6, 1922, a powerful explosion awakened the inhabitants of the hamlets of Moita and Lomba d'Egua. Guided by the glow of a small fire, they arrived in front of the Capelinha, which was in flames. Only the walls which were badly shaken remained, and part of the framework was consumed by the flames.

«Providentially, the statue of Our Lady had been removed the night before. The bandits (Maria Carreira says quite simply, “the freemasons”) had perforated the wall in four places, and had placed there four explosive devices. A fifth one, placed on the trunk of the holm-oak, had not exploded.»⁴⁸¹

Indignation was widespread. Even the liberal paper *O Seculo* joined in the chorus of indignation. Summoned to parliament, the minister concerned promised to open an investigation, which of course never took place. A widespread rumour quickly designated the guilty parties: the friends of the Tinsmith. In following months, two of them saw their sons commit suicide. Was it the chastisement of Heaven? One of the two guilty parties was converted while the other left the country.⁴⁸²

The new parish priest of Fatima, Father Agostinho Marques Ferreira, organized a procession of protest for March 13. The procession left the church of Fatima and went right up to the place of the apparitions. Before the Capelinha, Mass was celebrated in the presence of ten thousand of the faithful, who had responded to the parish priest's appeal. This is an indication of how the good people of the area were already unanimous in their fervour and prompt to manifest it.

The bombing was to have another fortunate consequence. It undoubtedly made Bishop da Silva, always overly prudent and slow to make up his mind, resolve to become more actively involved in the affairs of Fatima...

MAY 3, 1922: OPENING OF THE CANONICAL PROCESS. Finally giving in to the numerous pleas of Canon Formigao, he decided to open the canonical inquiry which could culminate in the official recognition of the apparitions. In one month, thanks to the devoted work of the first historian of Fatima, everything was decided, the commission was appointed, and on May 3 an ordinance from the bishop announced the event.

MAY 13, 1922: THE GREAT CEREMONY OF REPARATION. For May 13,

the fifth anniversary of the first apparition, a crowd of sixty thousand pilgrims – as many as for the great solar miracle – surrounded the Cova da Iria. An altar was built before the Capelinha, whose roof had been blown up. The parish priest of Fatima celebrated Mass, and Father José Pedro Ferreira preached a sermon on devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. At the museum of the vice-postulation for the seers' cause of beatification, one can see a moving photograph of the scene.

Mr. de Sousa Leitaó, who at the beginning of the previous year had succeeded the Tinsmith as Administrator of Vila Nova, received at the last moment a telegram from the government ordering him to interfere: «Reactionary gathering at Fatima absolutely forbidden.» Freemason though he was, our man was not devoid of good sense and he told the prefect to disobey this order, since it was impossible to execute. Lisbon soon withdrew its prohibition of the demonstration. «Disgusted with all this, Mr. de Sousa Leitaó resigned his office. Four days after the thirteenth, he transferred his powers over to Mr. Antonio de Sa Pavilon», whom we shall have occasion to mention again later. In the meantime, the sect had just suffered yet another stinging setback. Things had changed decidedly since 1917; now everything was going against it!

“I HAD OUR LADY AT MY HOME!” After the bombing of March 6, the influx of pilgrims to the Cova da Iria was even greater. They were drawn there neither by the seer, who the year before had already left Fatima, nor by the beauty of the place, nor by the clergy (which although it now permitted the pilgrimage still did not encourage it), nor by the chapel, which unfortunately was badly damaged. Only the sweet presence of the Immaculate Virgin – a presence invisible, yet palpable and so efficacious – could irresistibly draw a regular flow of pilgrims for each anniversary of the apparitions. When he was congratulated later on for the magnificent success of Fatima, Bishop da Silva could say in all truth: *«I didn't do anything. It was the people and the Holy Virgin who did everything before my arrival.»*

«We wanted to repair the chapel at once (relates Maria Carreira) but the Bishop said we were not to do so till he gave permission. This made us very sad. It depressed us very much to see the chapel in such a state and we didn't like to stay by it. We used to go there, say our prayers, and come away again. The people used to come to our house instead and pray by the statue. Among them were Father Marques and Father Formigao. People used to kneel by the door and pray. *There were always people there and Our Lady answered them* just the same so that people should have more

faith. I was very happy to have Our Lady in my house. But now, Father, it upsets me to see people getting worse and worse.

«On the 13th of each month, a great many people gathered to take the statue in procession to the Cova da Iria. We had no bier but everyone wanted a turn at carrying it. There were many promises to do this, and so each one carried it a little way. We sang and prayed as we went, and when we arrived there, we spent the afternoon at our devotions and had a procession; then we returned to my house. Oh, what happy times those were! As Our Lady passed, the people knelt in the road as they do for the Blessed Sacrament. It was beautiful in those days to see so many people thinking only of holy things. There was so much prayer, in fact *we would spend a whole day from early morning onwards in Our Lady's company*. Many came to fulfil their promises and light candles; others came to ask for certain graces, but everyone went away happy.»⁴⁸³

THE “VOICE OF FATIMA”. On October 13, 1922 there appeared three thousand copies of a review specially devoted to the pilgrimage. With the authorization of the bishop and under the direction of Canon Formigao, the “Voice of Fatima” was soon to inform all of Portugal about the message of Fatima and the wonderful miracles of graces, healings and innumerable conversions worked there by Our Lady of the Rosary. By 1925, the circulation of this journal had grown to 50,000 copies, by 1929 it was 100,000, in 1934 it was 200,000 and by 1937 it was 300,000. It was a tremendous success.⁴⁸⁴

On the same day, October 13, 1922, there were forty thousand pilgrims at the Cova da Iria and forty Masses were celebrated there. Once again it was the saintly Father Cruz, so popular, who did the preaching. Here is Father Formigao's enthusiastic account:

«When the Mass was over, the Reverend Doctor Francisco Cruz of Lisbon mounted the pulpit. He pronounced a few words which were simple and without elaborate preparation, but which penetrated to the bottom of our hearts. It is a saint who speaks. His emaciated and ascetic figure, his friendly and calm demeanour, his sweet and angelic unction, his reputation as a man of surprising virtue, these alone have the value of a long and substantial sermon.

«For about half an hour he discourses with an utterly apostolic eloquence

about devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary and extols the need for prayer and penance. After the instruction, many of the pilgrims leave. But the majority find it quite difficult to tear themselves away from this little corner of Heaven, which wins souls over and captivates hearts.

«I estimate the number of pilgrims at forty thousand people. Thousands of images of Our Lady of the Rosary and copies of the “Voice of Fatima”, welcomed with transports of joy, are distributed free. Little by little the carriages, cars and trucks move out, while the first shadows of the night descend upon the mountain.

«A few rare groups of inhabitants of the region still remain in prayer near the commemorative monument. Meanwhile, farther away, on the roads and mountain trails, the pilgrims return to their households after a long and arduous expedition, murmuring their praises and chanting their religious canticles, their souls overflowing with a joy which is not of this world, cherishing the sweet hope of visiting again soon this incomparable centre of devotion, where they have left a little bit of their heart.»⁴⁸⁵

Finally, on December 13, with the permission of His Grace, workers began repairs on the damaged Capelinha, adding a roof for the celebration of Masses.

How many happy developments for the pilgrimage in one year!

THE YEARS 1923-1925

In 1923, the new administrator, Antonio de Sa Pavilon, sought a new pretext for intervening in the well at the Cova da Iria: «It will cause infection! It must be stopped! It is a disgrace!» declares Francisco Alves, Deputy of Public Health, who was consulted right away. A series of orders came, but the parish priest of Fatima did not budge. The zeal of the Administration was of course very much open to question: everywhere in the region there were similar wells, cisterns or even ponds where peasants drew water, without His Honour being in the least disturbed. Besides, the water from the Cova, far from harming public health, was actually healing the sick! What more could they want?

Nevertheless, Father de Marchi reports:

«The Bishop of Leiria gave the order to complete the well, deepen it and

cover it.

«While the work was going on, the Administrator showed up, accompanied by the Deputy for Public Health and the parish priest, because word had been spread that the well was poisoned. A bucket of very clear water was drawn out, which Mr. Alves declared drinkable.

«After the Capelinha, the well was the first work completed on the spot of the apparitions.»⁴⁸⁶

In 1923 and 1924, the authorities attempted once more to forbid access to the Cova da Iria, but in vain. The comical episodes from these final attempts should be read in Barthas. Among others was this highly significant fact. The Administrator «had left the soldiers beside the farm called *da Carreira*... they then joined the pilgrims, buying medals and Rosaries, touching them to the venerated image just like the other “delinquents”.»⁴⁸⁷

Within a few years, Our Lady of Fatima had rendered totally ineffectual the anticlerical rage of the Masonic authorities who had been in place for a century and a half, almost without interruption. In short, little by little the people were converted, and government edicts were futile.

A MYSTERIOUS SHOWER OF FLOWERS. On May 13, 1924, a greater concourse of pilgrims than ever before was noticed: two hundred thousand faithful, – three times as great as for the solar miracle – hastened to the feet of Our Lady. And although Bishop da Silva still did not officiate, he was present among his sheep. Did the Queen of Heaven wish to show Her satisfaction? In any case, as had already happened on September 13, 1917 and May 13, 1918, the crowd witnessed the atmospheric spectacle of a shower of flowers, flakes or mysterious petals – they can hardly be described – which graciously fell from Heaven and disappeared from sight when they reached the soil. Bishop da Silva himself attested to this fact.⁴⁸⁸

“THE SERVITES OF OUR LADY.” Another important event in this same year: since the sick were becoming more and more numerous, on June 14, 1924, “the Association of the Servites of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima”⁴⁸⁹ was founded.

THE BUILDING. On October 13, the laying of the cornerstone of the hospice

for the sick took place. Let it be said now, that from this time on, the work at the Cova da Iria was uninterrupted, going on for decades and occupying more than a hundred workers. And the spontaneous gifts of the faithful left upon the tree trunks always sufficed to finance them, without there ever being any need to organize collections. This fact is singular at the very least!⁴⁹⁰ This wonderful generosity of the Portuguese people, which had been unfailing since August 13, 1917, gives unquestionable expression to the faith, fervour and filial gratitude of the “faithful nation” towards its Heavenly Patroness.

As Cardinal Cerejeira wrote so well on the subject of this first period of the pilgrimage:

«In spite of the reservations of the Church and the obstinate, ridiculous opposition of those in power, Fatima continued to move the religious conscience of the country. Without the Church and against the power of the State, the light of the miracle shone more and more brightly in the sky of Portugal, and the fire of the crowds’ enthusiasm spread to the entire country.»⁴⁹¹

So true were the Cardinal’s words that this profound movement of conversion finally made possible the political and social recovery of the nation, which had been attempted so many times, but until then always in vain. This time the enterprise was to succeed. No, the “Portuguese jinx” would not last forever. It was not an inevitable necessity, and finally light could be seen at the end of the tunnel. Why this sudden, unexpected change? Because since 1917, the powerful Virgin had promised to help Her people, «if Her requests were heeded». She kept Her word.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNINGS OF A MAGNIFICENT RENAISSANCE (1926 - 1931)

«If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace.»
Ten years had not yet elapsed since Her promise, when after the conversion of a multitude of souls, the Blessed Virgin granted peace to Her privileged nation. This time it was a stable peace, which finally liberated the country from the yoke of the Masonic revolution, which persecuted religion and worked against the country. Deliverance came at the very moment when the situation appeared the most desperate.

I. THE DAWN OF NATIONAL RECOVERY (1926-1929)

PORTUGAL ON THE BRINK OF THE ABYSS. In fact, as we have said, after the assassination of Sidonio Pais, although the Church had been able to preserve its liberty, the State fell once again into Republican anarchy. In 1919, the supporters of Don Manuel had attempted a restoration of the monarchy in the north of the country, but this too failed after one month. The following years were just as sad as those which had preceded the national upheaval of 1917-1918. Simply recalling a few events, alas, is enough to show that...

On October 19, 1920, several heads of the Republic were massacred by the Bolsheviks with refined cruelty. The financial situation was catastrophic, and strikes multiplied. Everywhere there was disorder. Between 1910 and 1926, one could count no less than sixteen revolutions and more than forty changes of the ministry. At the time, one member of the government, Canto de Maia, admitted before Parliament: «the country is a basket case!» Disgust was widespread. «Portugal is humiliated, ruined, a laughing-stock, on the brink of the abyss.»⁴⁹² At any moment the “Red Legion” could have seized power and swept away the puppet government. At this point the Army intervened.

THE SAVING COUP D'ÉTAT OF MAY 28, 1926

Portuguese historians have not failed to stress a happy coincidence: it was from

Braga, “the Rome of Portugal”, the capital of the Catholic bastion of the North, that the military uprising came, at the very moment when two hundred thousand of the faithful were attending a triumphant Marian congress, during which the nuncio himself did not fear to attribute the national recovery to the apparitions of Fatima.

Father José de Oliveira Dias writes: «Just at the moment when Our Lady’s statue went out in procession from the Church of “Populo” to go on to Sameiro (the great national sanctuary dedicated to the Immaculate Conception), the troops of the eighth infantry regiment, under the blessing of Mary, one might say, left their barracks next to the Church in anticipation of the Revolution.»⁴⁹³

From a window at his command post, General Gomes da Costa was present at the procession of the congress members. A prestigious soldier, former commander-in-chief of the expeditionary corps in Flanders during the First World War, he headed the uprising which he directed as he left Braga, while General Carmona for his part marched on Lisbon from Evora, thus taking the capital in a pincers movement. «Our country is sick! It must be saved!» Such was the theme of the national revolution. And, as Gomes da Costa repeats, «only the army had sufficient moral authority and material force to identify itself with the unity of a country which did not want to die.»⁴⁹⁴

The movement corresponded so well to the unanimous expectations of the nation, both the masses as well as the elites, that «in three days it won over the entire country and triumphed without a single shot being fired or a single drop of blood being spilled, a unique instance in the history of the military revolutions in Portugal. The faithful attributed it to a special protection of the Virgin of Sameiro.»⁴⁹⁵

THE FIRST STEPS OF “THE NATIONAL REVOLUTION”. On May 31, the legislature was dissolved and the president of the Republic resigned. Still, the change was not a radical one. Before his departure, President Machado had succeeded in imposing his man on the victorious generals: Major Cabecadas, one of the founders of the Masonic Republic of 1910. On June 17, however, he stepped aside.

In spite of his courage and patriotism, General Gomes da Costa himself remained too liberal to successfully conclude the work of recuperation. He temporized too much. «The military, which had not been afraid to march on

Lisbon with two badly equipped companies of soldiers, remained fearful in the midst of the politicians», observes Ploncard d'Assac.⁴⁹⁶ In addition, the parties began to reform themselves and Masonry began to agitate. The leader of the coup d'état clearly lacked the necessary energy and political savvy. On July 7, he stepped aside to leave power in the sole hands of General Carmona.

Supreme power now rested in firmer hands, but for two more years the situation remained difficult. In February of 1927, uprisings broke out at Porto and Lisbon. Without the firm reaction of Carmona they would have plunged the country into revolution. However, the national movement enjoyed the double support of the army, which was completely loyalist, and the best part of the people, who desired order and rejoiced to see full liberty finally given to religion in an official manner by a whole series of laws favourable to the Church. On March 25, 1928, the election of General Carmona as President of the Republic confirmed the stability of the new regime.

THE FINANCIAL COLLAPSE AND THE APPEAL TO SALAZAR. One fly in the ointment remained, however: the catastrophic financial situation left by the former regime, which the new government had not succeeded in correcting. Carmona then requested a loan from the League of Nations. This was granted, but on the condition that one of the League's liaison agents would have a permanent seat in Lisbon and control Portuguese economic policy. Having refused this unacceptable clause, General Carmona saw only one solution: to appeal to the only man who seemed capable of saving the country from the financial debacle. Thus, on April 28, 1928, Oliveira Salazar entered the government as Minister of Finance, now assuming the heaviest responsibility for the destiny of his country. The event was as important, if not more important, than the uprising of May 28, 1926.

A "POLITICAL MIRACLE"? «Of all the states of Europe (said Bainville) Portugal is certainly the one which for thirty years has shown signs of the most tenacious anarchy.»⁴⁹⁷ Yet after 1928, it was to become the most stable country in all of Europe: General Carmona remained President of the Republic until his death in 1951, and Salazar directed the government until 1968!

After a century and a half of Masonic domination, and sixteen years of atheistic and antichristian revolution, for forty years Portugal would be governed by the most Catholic of all the heads of State of his time.⁴⁹⁸ In this astonishing double contrast, is there not a sort of "political miracle"? Without entering into useless

controversies, we can say at least that the immense majority of the Portuguese people believed just that. The bishops also were unanimous in this opinion – an anti-Salazar bishop could not be found until 1958! – and Pope Pius XII himself concurred with the Portuguese people and their bishops. They all recognized in Salazar the “man of Providence” granted by God to Portugal for its national salvation. This is a fact of history. There are superabundant texts to prove it, and to be convinced it suffices to refer to the works of the best informed Fatima historians.⁴⁹⁹

SALAZAR: FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

“The man of providence”? Salazar was just that, first of all in the sense that he did not seize power through demagoguery or political intrigues. On the contrary, he was called to power by the head of State because his rare qualities – his unequalled competence in economic matters, his fundamental honesty, his obvious lack of interest in power for its own sake – made him indispensable for the recovery of the nation.

Now this man, who was the only one capable of saving the country in this critical hour, was first of all a devoted son of Holy Church, to whom he recognized that he owed everything he was. And if he accepted power because he was called to it, he had resolved also to put into practice, with prudence but also with tenacity, a social and political program which was completely Catholic in its inspiration.

For a man as sincerely and publicly Catholic as Salazar, both in his moral life and in his intimate convictions, to be able to rise to power and maintain it, in a country which only yesterday had been given over to the fiercest anticlericalism – and this without either armed struggle or bloodshed – was it the result of a prodigy? Or simply the wise designs of Providence, which in admirable fashion had prepared him for this role?

AT THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar was born in 1889 in the village of Vimieiro in the north of Coimbra, in a region still very much imbued by Catholicism. He came entirely from peasant stock. His family lived in poverty. Young Antonio had an unlimited affection and admiration for his mother. At the age of eleven, he entered the seminary of Viseu. He was a hard-working boy, intelligent and pious. He was quickly chosen as president of

the Congregation of Our Lady, which encompassed the elite of the seminary. In 1905, he began his studies in theology. Saint Thomas fascinated him and left a profound mark on him. In June of 1908 he received minor orders. He was only nineteen; he had to wait before he could be ordained a priest...

Three months later, however, he changed orientation and decided not to become a priest. Let us make it clear that this sudden defection, which came before any definitive engagement, in itself was in no way dishonourable; and in Salazar's case, the motives which undoubtedly inspired it – the fear of being a burden to his parents several more years, or more profoundly, the absence of sufficiently clear certitude of the divine call, and the feeling of being unworthy of such a high vocation – do not permit us to minimize in any way his high moral qualities. The whole remainder of his life would furnish the proof of that. With an immense gratitude for his masters in the seminary, he always kept a lively and firm faith never shaken by doubt, moral integrity, and a discreet piety, free of all ostentation but very profound. He always remained faithful to the practice of daily Mass. «He leads the life of a monk», Cardinal Cerejeira said of him.

IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. At the college of Viseu, where he taught while he was still a student, he became enamoured of education. In this way he believed that he would be the most useful to his country and the Church. In a conference he gave in 1909, he reveals to us his ideal of that time: «We hear it said all the time... that Portugal is in decadence, that we are on the verge of national annihilation. Everybody speaks of disasters. We encounter too many Jeremiahs in this country, wailing for the old days. And notice, gentlemen, that *these Jeremiahs wail enough. They wail too much, and do not work enough.*»⁵⁰⁰

In 1910, he entered the University of Coimbra, where he studied law and economic sciences. He worked so hard and scored such dazzling successes in all his exams that he was given the chair of economic policy even before he had completed his doctorate.

During these years of study, he formed a very close friendship with a young priest his age who like him was studying at the University, Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira.⁵⁰¹ Together they fought for the CDAC, the “Academic Centre for Christian Democracy”. As Salazar later explained, the only democratic thing about it was the name, chosen in 1901 after the encyclical *Graves de Communi* of Pope Leo XIII. In fact, the CDAC was founded to oppose the antichristian propaganda of the masonic Republic. Of all the nationalist leaning organizations,

it was the most specifically Catholic. Without giving a specific political solution for the future, the movement tended to spread among the youths the social ideas of La Tour du Pin and the encyclicals of Leo XIII.⁵⁰²

Soon, Salazar and Father Cerejeira, who had both become professors at the University, became leaders of the CDAC, which was then transformed into a “Catholic Centre”. In 1921, Salazar was urged to take part in the elections. He was elected. But the proceedings in Parliament so disgusted him that, after taking part in the first session, he took the train back to Coimbra the same evening. From there he sent in his resignation.

In 1926, after the coup d’état of May 28, his reputation as an excellent economist resulted in his being called to collaborate in the new government. But since he was not given strict control over all the expenses of the State – a condition he had demanded because it was the only workable remedy for the financial disorder – he returned to his life as a simple professor, until the moment when the situation became so serious that once again the government requested his help.

“THE MINISTRY OF GOD FOR THE COMMON GOOD”. When the minister Duarte Pacheco came to Coimbra to persuade him to accept the office of Minister of Finance, far from welcoming this offer with enthusiasm, Salazar hesitated. Would the situation really allow him to be useful to the country? He put off the decision until the next day. His biographer describes what happened next:

«He wanted beforehand to take counsel of his well-informed friends. Cerejeira (the two still lived in the same apartment at Rua dos Grilos) was the first to be told, and he was decidedly in favour of accepting. In his heart of hearts Salazar still resisted. His great modesty made him afraid of such a promotion. Then he sent for a religious saint, Father Mateo Crawley-Boevey, the ardent apostle of enthronement of the Sacred Heart, who was then at Coimbra, and would occasionally visit the two professors at Rua dos Grilos. Father Mateo was categorical; he strongly maintained that duty required Salazar to say yes.

«That night Salazar spent several hours in prayer before the tabernacle, in a private chapel. At dawn Father Mateo celebrated Mass for this intention. Salazar himself served and received communion. After his thanksgiving,

his hesitations disappeared: “It is my duty to accept!”»⁵⁰³

Since then we know the deeper reason that inspired his decision. On July 4, 1924, in his great discourse to the Eucharistic Congress at Braga, he had expressed this magnificent formula to define the Christian vision of political power: «Not to aspire to power as though it were a right, but to accept it and exercise it as a duty; *to consider the State as the ministry of God for the common good...*»

Salazar then went to Lisbon. Since all his conditions had been accepted, he entered office on April 28, 1928.

THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY. By a veritable prodigy of science, prudence and courage, within a year the new minister managed to straighten out a disastrous financial situation. At his arrival, the budget was burdened by an enormous deficit, the public debt was huge, gold reserves were exhausted. For the first time in a quarter of a century, there was now a budget surplus of several million escudos. Soon the public debt was retired, gold reserves were reconstituted, and the escudo became one of the most solid currencies in the world.⁵⁰⁴

FIRST OF ALL, LIBERTY FOR THE CHURCH! Far from letting himself be intoxicated by success, Salazar never forgot his most elevated ideal: to be useful to the Church while serving his country. A serious incident, which took place some time after his arrival at the ministry, even shows us that he had made this service of the Church a formal condition of his entering the government. Although the soldiers in power were supported by the Catholics, they were not all Catholics themselves. This was true for quite a few of them! General Carmona, who had been a freemason himself, did not get rid of the old, obstinately anticlerical republican politicians overnight. One day, in the ministers' council, they even discussed once more the limitations of certain acts of Catholic worship: processions, ringing of the bells, etc. Nastiness? Of course, but anticlericalism is a devouring passion. Fortunately Salazar was there. He then reminded them of the condition he had set before agreeing to be Minister of Finance: the liberty which the Church enjoyed since the coup d'état of May 26 must not be limited in any way. Then he promptly submitted his resignation, which caused the rest of those in the government to do the same. However, Salazar recovered his post in the new government,⁵⁰⁵ and he undoubtedly grew still more in the estimation of General Carmona.

THE GOVERNMENT AT THE FEET OF OUR LADY. What intimate joy Salazar must have experienced when on May 12, 1929, he found himself... at Fatima, accompanied by General Carmona and several members of the government! In 1928, the wife and daughter of the President of the Republic had already been present at the blessing of the cornerstone of the basilica. This time, however, it meant a great deal more. Although the occasion of this official act was the inauguration of the new hospital, in fact the presence of the highest government officials at the Cova da Iria constituted the government's first act of homage to Our Lady of Fatima.⁵⁰⁶ This official homage symbolizes the wonderful transformation of Portugal, which in a few years went from one of the worst Masonic regimes to a national government, resolutely favourable to the Church. Although Salazar was the providential instrument of this fortunate change, the initial cause was unquestionably the magnificent religious renaissance, of which Fatima was the inexhaustible source. This renaissance became even more abundant as the hierarchical authorities gradually recognized the authenticity of the apparitions.

II. TOWARDS THE OFFICIAL RENAISSANCE: THE HIERARCHY RESPONDS TO THE GRACE OF FATIMA (1926 - 1930)

In the history of the early days of Fatima, a notable fact commands our attention: the way the Portuguese clergy took their time about developing an interest in it. Until 1920, Fatima depended practically on the Patriarch of Lisbon, Cardinal Mendes Belo, who was not favourable to the apparitions.⁵⁰⁷ As we have seen, from 1920 to 1926 the Bishop of Fatima finally took the initial measures indispensable to the development and good order of the pilgrimage. But only in later years, from 1926 to 1931, did Fatima attain the rank of a great national pilgrimage patronized by the entire hierarchy, which was unanimous and fervent in its support.

Admittedly, when he was congratulated one day on the magnificent success of the pilgrimage, Bishop da Silva could respond in all humility and in all truth: «I didn't do anything. The people and the Holy Virgin did everything before I arrived.»⁵⁰⁸ However, if Our Lady willed that innumerable prodigies accompany Her apparitions, it was of course to irresistibly attract throngs of the faithful to the Cova da Iria, but it was also – and even more so – to convince the authorities of the Church of the reality of Her presence in this blessed place, and the truth of

Her message, *and thus to lead the bishops and the Pope to honour Her Immaculate Heart more, and spread the devotion to it in the whole Church.* This is an essential point of the message: if the Blessed Virgin Mary is the all-powerful Mediatrix, capable of pouring out upon the world torrents of grace which can convert it, God wishes Her to accord them in response to the filial, public and solemn devotion of the Shepherds of the flock to Her Immaculate Heart.

The example of Portugal is significant. The extraordinary graces granted by Our Lady to this people have admirably corresponded to the acts of filial devotion to Her performed by the Portuguese bishops. We might add that this gradual rallying of all the bishops of the country to the cause of Fatima undoubtedly would never have happened without encouragement from Rome – which in this first period was discreet and frequent, and highly effective. Let us then follow step by step the events marking this filial correspondence of the hierarchy to the grace of Fatima. It was of capital importance, decisive for the spiritual and temporal salvation of Portugal. It was the condition for the miracle to happen.

1926: SEVERAL PORTUGUESE BISHOPS AT THE COVA DA IRIA. On August 15, 1926, the Archbishop of Evora, Don Manuel Mendes de Conceicao Santos, who hailed from a village near Fatima, visited the sanctuary incognito. Also noticed there was the Archbishop of Braga, Primate of Portugal.

That same year on the Feast of All Saints, Our Lady of Fatima received a much more important visit. The apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Nicotra, then at Leiria for the commemoration of the seven hundredth anniversary of Saint Francis of Assisi, expressed a desire to visit the monastery of Batalha. Bishop da Silva accompanied him, and there the Pope's representative asked to be taken to Fatima. The spectacle at the Cova da Iria moved him profoundly. Although there was no pilgrimage that day, a little crowd was there, praying on their knees before the Capelinha with a piety seen nowhere else. Later on the nuncio declared: *«It seemed as though Our Lady was present among these brave people.»* At the end of the Rosary, recited by Bishop da Silva in a loud voice, the nuncio was visibly moved. He addressed an allocution to the faithful and granted them a hundred days indulgence on the spot! It was a memorable visit, foreboding excellent results for the future.

On December 13, 1926, it was the Bishop of Madera, Don Antonio Manuel Pereira, who came on pilgrimage and celebrated Mass in the pavilion of the sick.

The people exulted with joy.⁵⁰⁹ The hierarchy was no longer contenting itself with “permitting” things; these kinds of gestures, which before long were rapidly multiplied, were already a form of official recognition and a precious encouragement for the pilgrims. They drew down an abundance of graces and blessings from Heaven on the Land of Holy Mary. After the people, the Shepherds in turn fervently responded to the message of the Immaculate Virgin. That same year there also appeared the first “Pilgrim’s Manual”.

1927: THE BLESSING OF THE GREAT STATIONS OF THE CROSS. On January 21, 1927, the Sacred Congregation of Rites granted Fatima the privilege of being able to celebrate the Mass of Our Lady of the Rosary daily at the sanctuary. This concession was the first official act of the Holy See in favour of the pilgrimage.

However, the major event of the year was on June 26: inauguration of the great Way of the Cross erected on the little mountainous road which goes from Batalha to Fatima. Starting from the crossroads of Reguengo do Fetal, eight miles from the sanctuary, the granite crosses were spaced out one-half mile apart. The procession, which began at eight o’clock in the morning, did not reach the Capelinha until two in the afternoon. There, for the first time, Bishop da Silva himself celebrated Holy Mass. Four hundred pilgrims received communion there. In spite of the exhausting walk, they had observed the Eucharistic fast since midnight. How zealously penance was practiced in those days! And it was practiced at Fatima more than anywhere else.⁵¹⁰

MAY 13, 1928: LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE OF THE BASILICA. To describe this event we can hardly do better than give a few excerpts from the report given in *L’Osservatore Romano* on the following June 3. After a long description of the events, the author goes into his report for May 13. It is moving to observe that, in essence, nothing has changed since that time in the order of the ceremonies:

«On May 12, at ten o’clock in the evening, a priest gives some meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary. After the Rosary and the Litany of Our Lady, the torchlight procession begins. The enormous multitude of 150,000 persons was then transformed into a great torrent of light, winding through the high walls, the route, the chapels and the miraculous fountain, looking as though it wanted to illuminate Heaven itself with its splendour.

«After the procession, around midnight, everybody gathers around the altar where the Holy Sacrament is exposed... And the nocturnal adoration lasts until three o'clock in the morning. Then the Masses begin. They are celebrated at six altars and last until noon... Eighteen thousand people approach the Eucharistic Table.»

After the account of the blessing of the cornerstone by the Archbishop of Evora, the author continues his description of the ceremonies:

«The most solemn event is the Mass at noon and the blessing of the sick. The Mass is celebrated by His Grace the Bishop of Leiria, and the benediction is given by His Grace the Bishop of Evora. Three hundred thousand people attend it...

«When the statue of Our Lady is carried in procession from the Chapel of the Apparitions right up to the place where holy Mass will be celebrated in the presence of four hundred sick people, one witnesses the wonderful spectacle of three hundred thousand handkerchiefs waving in salute to the Virgin.

«The applause, the hurrahs, and the tears that well up in everybody's eyes, from the bishops to the humblest peasant behind his cart, give this moment an extraordinary grandeur. It was like an enormous flock of white doves winging their way towards Heaven. The same scene is repeated at the end, when the Image is taken back to the Chapel of the Apparitions.

«After the benediction, His Grace the Archbishop of Evora addresses a vibrant appeal to the faithful present, exhorting them not to fail to sing at Fatima and in every place the glories of Mary, Patroness of Portugal. "Today was the greatest religious demonstration", he added, "and perhaps none like it has ever been seen."

«After the *Ave Maria* of Lourdes and other canticles, as a profession of faith everybody sings *Queremos Deus* (We want God), renewing the consecration to Our Lady one final time.

«Two hours later, this mysterious place where every stone breathes of piety, penance and sacrifice, had become once more a haven of peace and silence...

“ILLUSTRIOUS PILGRIMS”. «It would be impossible to give a list of the personalities who took part in the pilgrimage. We will mention however the wife and daughter of the President of the Ministry who approach the holy Table today, and also the wife and daughter of General Carmona, President of the Portuguese Republic.»⁵¹¹

On October 1, 1928, the nuncio, Archbishop Nicotra, went a second time to Fatima. This year alone a million pilgrims could be counted at the Cova da Iria. When we recall the fervour of the pilgrimages of that era, we see what an immense movement of conversion was at work among the people.

AT ROME: AN UNOFFICIAL APPROVAL

After the visits of the apostolic nuncio to Fatima, after the favourable articles appearing in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Pope himself gave clear signs of his benevolence towards the nascent pilgrimage.

On January 9, 1929, while receiving in audience the Portuguese Seminary in Rome, Pius XI offered the seminarians two images of Our Lady of Fatima, one for themselves and one for their families.⁵¹²

Another fact from the same period is worth reporting. The Dominican Bishop of Portalegre, Don Domingos Frutuoso, did not want to admit the reality of the apparitions. He had even forbidden public invocation of Our Lady of Fatima in his diocese. In 1929, during his *ad limina* visit, he confided these hesitations to the Holy Father. «“How many seminarians did you have in 1917?” asked the Pope. “Eighteen, most Holy Father.” “How many do you have now?” “A hundred and twenty.” “*Then why are you waiting to thank Our Lady of Fatima?*”»⁵¹³

On December 6 of the same year, the Pope himself wished to bless a statue of the Virgin of Fatima offered by the sculptor José Ferreira Thedim, for the new chapel of the Portuguese College at Rome, dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.⁵¹⁴

Again at Rome, and not without the approval of the Pope, on May 11, 1930, Father Gonzaga da Fonseca, S.J. gave an audio-visual conference on Fatima at the Biblical Institute. Before him was a vast audience of curial Cardinals, diplomats, professors and students from the Roman universities.⁵¹⁵

Of course these simple gestures had no official significance, but at least they showed the Holy Father's thought at that time quite clearly. Word of these events quickly came back to Portugal, bringing the faithful and the apostles of Our Lady a precious comfort: the blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff. No doubt they also encouraged Bishop da Silva to speed up a successful conclusion to the canonical process. It had been opened in 1922 and the work had been proceeding at a regrettably slow pace.

1930: CANONICAL APPROVAL OF THE APPARITIONS

On October 13, 1930, thirteen years after the events, the Bishop of Leiria, in his pastoral letter "A divina Providencia", finally pronounced his solemn judgment. Although this act proceeded from his own authority, Bishop da Silva had desired to obtain Rome's permission. He also confided later on to Canon Barthas «that he had sent to His Holiness Pius XI a whole dossier on the events at the Cova da Iria, and that after being completely informed, the Holy Father had encouraged him to publish his approbation...»⁵¹⁶

After an extended passage summing up all the proofs furnished by the inquiry, Bishop da Silva concluded his pastoral letter in this way:

«By virtue of the considerations we have just laid out, and others which we must omit to be brief, humbly invoking the divine Holy Spirit and trusting in the protection of Most Holy Mary, after having heard the Reverend consultors of our diocese, we judge it good:

«1) To declare worthy of faith the visions of the children at the Cova da Iria, (in the) parish of Fatima in our diocese, which took place from May 13 to October 13, 1917;

«2) To officially permit the cult of Our Lady of Fatima.»⁵¹⁷

In their canonical brevity the words were cold and dry, but they were decisive. They filled with joy the hundred thousand faithful present at the Cova da Iria on October 13, 1930. Their joy must have increased when they were undoubtedly told of the new indulgences which the Holy Father had just granted all pilgrims at Fatima on October 1.⁵¹⁸

III. THE DECISIVE ACT: THE NATIONAL CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (MAY 13, 1931)

The solemn approval of the apparitions, which had been awaited for so long, as well as the obvious good will of the Sovereign Pontiff, aroused a holy enthusiasm in all of Portugal... In particular, it allowed a unanimous episcopate, gathered around Cardinal Cerejeira,⁵¹⁹ to give public testimony of its trustful devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

They decided that on May 13, 1931, a great national pilgrimage of thanksgiving would be organized under the direction of all the bishops of the country. The bishops would then solemnly consecrate Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

THE RESPONSE TO A DESIRE OF HEAVEN ITSELF. We know that this decision, on which depended the future of their country (as we will see), was made by the bishops in the course of their retreat in common. That year it was preached by Father Mateo in the first few days of January, 1931. Who took the initiative for this act which corresponded so exactly to the great Secret, which at that time had not yet been divulged? Father Alonso tells us, very significantly, that it was Sister Lucy herself who inspired the whole idea.⁵²⁰ When and how did she come to know about *this desire of Heaven, commanding her to ask that all the bishops of the country solemnly consecrate Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*? We do not know, and undoubtedly only the great work of Father Alonso will be able to furnish the complete answer. How did she inform the bishops of these desires of the Divine Will? That, we can easily figure out: through her bishop, Msgr. da Silva. The latter however, always circumspect, proposed the national consecration to his brethren without telling them who had suggested this beautiful project. If he spoke about it to a few people – or perhaps to Father Mateo? – in any case he said nothing about it to Cardinal Cerejeira, who knew nothing of Lucy's request.⁵²¹

THE PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATIONS. Heaven never asks for anything impossible. And this time once again, as in the case of the devotion of reparation on the first Saturdays of the month,⁵²² divine Providence had prepared everything so well that the majority of the bishops – perhaps even all of them, with the single exception of the Bishop of Leiria, who had given them the idea – could accept this consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary without even realizing that it corresponded to a formal request of Our Lady of Fatima. Indeed,

the idea of a national consecration was widespread and favourably welcomed. In November of 1928, for the feast of Christ the King, had not the Portuguese bishops already solemnly consecrated their country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus? The consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary proposed to them in 1931, appeared to them as the continuation and natural completion of this first act.⁵²³

MAY 13, 1931. After the decision was made, Cardinal Cerejeira wrote an eloquent appeal to the pilgrims.⁵²⁴ They responded eagerly: three hundred thousand of the faithful could be counted that day, coming from all over Portugal. Some of them had not been afraid to walk for nine days to participate in the pilgrimage! In the presence of the apostolic nuncio, and all the bishops of the country or their representatives, before everybody and in the name of all, the Patriarch of Lisbon pronounced the Act of Consecration.

LIKE AN ECHO OF THE GREAT SECRET... We must quote here the essence of this magnificent text. It comes astonishingly close to the themes of the Secret, of which, however, the Cardinal was unaware. After giving a warm thanks to Our Lady for Her apparitions at Fatima, and for the shower of graces poured out since then at the Cova da Iria, the Cardinal read the formula of consecration. Quite happily, this consecration insisted forcefully on the hierarchical, episcopal character of the Act accomplished:

«The Shepherds chosen by Your Son to watch over and feed in His name the sheep He has acquired at the price of His blood – in this “Land of Holy Mary”, whose name cannot be pronounced without pronouncing Your own – come today – as the official and consecrated representatives of their flocks, and in an act of filial “homage” (vassalagem) of faith, love and trust – to solemnly consecrate the Portuguese nation to Your Immaculate Heart. Take it from our fragile hands into Your own; defend it and guard it as Your own property; make Jesus reign, conquer and rule in it. Outside of Him there is no salvation.»

What plenitude of meaning in these words! What greatness, what emotion, but also what supernatural clairvoyance regarding the grave perils which were imminent! For the Cardinal continues, alluding to recent events in Spain: the fall of Primo de Rivera in January 1930, the end of the monarchy and exile of Alphonsus XIII on April 14, 1931, the proclamation of the Republic, the riots and burning of churches and convents... This tempest which suddenly came to menace the whole Iberian peninsula gave a dramatic tonality to the consecration

of the little country of Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Mary had indeed been its ultimate recourse, its rampart, faced with a terrible danger of Bolshevik contamination. The Patriarch continued:

«We, the pontiffs of your people, feel a terrible storm raging around us, threatening to disperse and destroy the faithful flock of those who bless You because You are the Mother of Jesus. Afflicted, we stretch out our suppliant hands towards Your Son, as we cry out: “Save us, O Lord, for we perish!”...

«Intercede for Portugal, O Our Lady, in this grave hour when from the East blow furious winds, bringing cries of death against Your Son and against the civilization founded on His teachings, deceiving minds, perverting hearts, and lighting the fires of hatred and revolution in the world. *Help of Christians, pray for us!*»

After this allusion to Bolshevik Russia, its errors, and the wars and persecutions it stirs up everywhere, the Cardinal alluded to the danger of another formidable contamination, in this decadent post-war Europe: the easygoing, immoral, hedonistic life which draws down divine chastisements on societies:

«Intercede for Portugal, Our Lady, in this troubled hour when *the unclean waves of an open immorality*, which has even lost the notion of sin, exalt the rehabilitation of the flesh in the face of the very Cross of Your Son, threatening to choke in this world the lily of virtue nourished by the Eucharistic Blood of Jesus. *Virgin most Powerful, pray for us!*»

Granted, as Father Alonso correctly wrote, Portugal «since Salazar’s arrival in power, was steadily and confidently walking along new paths of prosperity and peace». ⁵²⁵ For his conclusion, the Cardinal expresses his anxiety just as distinctly. He realized how fragile this wonderful interior peace still was, he knew that it was a gift of God, a grace of Our Lady which must be continually merited by urgent supplications:

«Intercede for Portugal, Our Lady, *in this hour of passions and doubts when even the good run the risk of being lost...* Unite all the Portuguese people around Your Son, in the love of the Church and also in the cultivation of virtue, in respect for order and fraternal charity. *Queen of Peace, pray for us!*

«Remember finally, Patroness of our country, that Portugal once taught so many lands to proclaim You blessed among all women. In remembrance of what it once did for Your glory, *Our Lady of Fatima*, save it, by giving it Jesus, in Whom it will find Truth, Life, and Peace!»⁵²⁶

This solemn act of all the bishops. in which the crowds of the faithful participated so fervently by their prayers and penances, drew down a new shower of graces upon Portugal. Or rather, it multiplied the blessings which the most kind Virgin had begun to shower upon Her people since 1917. In response to this public devotion of the bishops to Her Immaculate Heart which corresponded so exactly with Her requests, Our Lady of Fatima could fully actualize and accomplish, in favour of Her nation which was consecrated to Her, a genuine and threefold miracle which we will now describe.

APPENDIX I - THE DIOCESAN INVESTIGATION OF FATIMA

We have described how, thanks to the efforts of Canon Formigao, Bishop da Silva finally decided to open a canonical inquiry on the apparitions of Fatima.⁵²⁷

Following the example of the Bishop of Tarbes in 1858, he conducted it in a solemn manner, publishing on May 3, 1922, the “Provisao”: *Entre todas as provas*, naming the members of the commission of inquiry.

«By reason of what we have just set forth (he declared), it seems to us our duty to study this case and have it studied, and to organize the process according to canonical laws. For this purpose we name the following commission...»⁵²⁸

Father Alonso, whose exhaustive study we will follow step by step,⁵²⁹ believes that the commission actually named was the best that could be formed at that time. It included Canon Formigao, the first investigator and first historian of the apparitions, Father Joao Quaresma, Vicar General of the diocese, and Fathers Manuel Marques dos Santos and Pereira da Silva, both professors at the seminary. As for the other members, they were the parish priests and deans from the area of Fatima, so as to get the most reliable information from direct witnesses: the parish priest of Fatima and the dean of Olival, and the parish priests of Batalha and S. Catarina da Serra.

Father Alonso writes: «from this commission one could expect a work well done, and without great difficulty. With the exception of Doctor Formigao, the members were relatively near each other, and moreover they had frequent pastoral contacts. For his part, Doctor Formigao, who came to Fatima during all the pilgrimages, would be welcomed with the warmest good will to the works of the study and discussion sessions.»

THE DEFICIENCIES OF THE DIOCESAN INQUIRY

«In spite of this, one must record a lamentable fact, clearly affirmed by the last survivor of this commission, Dr. Marques dos Santos: the work of the commission was too slow, and spaced out over too long a time...

«There was not even a single study session whose minutes are available; properly speaking the commission did not organize any dossier, and it met only at the end, on April 13 and 14, 1930, in a single session during which the report, written exclusively by Doctor Formigao, was read and unanimously approved.»

Why this disappointing inactivity? Father Alonso exposes the reasons. A postulator would have had to be named, with the duty of animating the process and keeping it going. Only Canon Formigao could have played this role. «We know from his letter of April 20, 1922, that he was ready to abandon his important occupations at Lisbon and Santarem to devote his full time to the process. Why didn't Bishop da Silva see that this was absolutely necessary for the process to preserve the desired rhythm and tone?... The other members undoubtedly possessed the qualities needed to contribute to the process, but precisely because Canon Formigao had a sort of monopoly on the knowledge of the facts of Fatima, this paralyzed all action that might have been attempted when he was not present...

«The other deficiencies of the process are the consequence of this lack of effective constitution of the commission. Also, there was no study and discussion session. In number and quality, the official interrogations were very feeble in comparison with the possibilities Fatima offered then, possibilities which are now lost forever...

«When the commission was named in May, 1922, the wonderful healings at Fatima were an obvious fact, on everybody's lips. Formigao collected them in

his first book. However, no expert research has been done on that subject. Nor was any sort of sub-commission named to work in the company of the experts.» No real study of the healings was made. That is a shame!

«Everything was left to the improvisation of the moment», Father Alonso continues, visibly inconsolable over such negligence. «It seems that in addition to the apparitions, Our Lady was expected to do the investigation also! This seems to be the meaning of certain phrases attributed to Bishop da Silva. In any case, what was done was due solely to the initiative and activity of Doctor Formigao. The bishop himself, whom we have seen all these years filled with a vigilant attention for developing devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, did not seem to have any interest in the process.

«Thus time was merrily allowed to pass by, and witnesses slowly disappeared... Facts and circumstances which today are so difficult to re-establish could have been reconstructed very easily by methodical work from the commission. And we would have had a wonderful history of Fatima, which we could have followed like a detailed chronicle of society.

«All these defects should not have existed in the process of apparitions so stupefying, so close to our time, so clear and even evident, with a multitude of witnesses so qualified by their presence, their social position and their psychological objectivity...» Indeed Father Alonso, who speaks here as a historian, is a hundred times correct! A well conducted canonical inquiry could have been able to furnish us with all the material for a fully scientific and exhaustive history of the events of Fatima.

A SURE AND WELL-FOUNDED JUDGMENT

However, and this is the very firm conclusion of Father Alonso himself, the canonical process such as it was, in spite of its omissions and deficiencies, conserves its whole value as a *sufficiently* ample inquiry which permitted the hierarchical authority to affirm solemnly, and with full knowledge of the case, the authenticity of the apparitions. «The documents which it utilized – which of course could have been infinitely more numerous in proofs, testimony and interrogations – are nevertheless so abundant and above all so objectively important, that they can lead the most rigorous historical criticism to make a well-founded judgment...»

From this point of view, the inquiry corresponded perfectly with the exigencies laid down by the bishop in the Provisao of May 3, 1922. The Bishop of Leiria concluded:

«The Church thirsts for the truth. This is why, if the events which took place at Fatima and are presented as supernatural are true, then we thank Our Lord. It will increase our faith and improve our morals; if they are false, it is fitting that their falsity be discovered...

«We order all the faithful of our diocese (canons 2023 and 2025) and we ask those of other dioceses to give an account of everything they know either in favour of or against the apparitions or extraordinary facts... and that they testify especially if, in these facts, there was or is some machination, superstition, some doctrine or anything contrary to our holy religion.

«Each member of the commission is authorized to receive the names of those who must or would like to testify; they will be convoked in good and due form.»

Precisely because there was no serious opposition against the apparitions, because the striking signs were innumerable and unanimously observed by all, it had seemed unnecessary to constitute an exhaustive dossier on the events. The deficiencies of the canonical process, regrettable in themselves, thus indirectly bear witness to the unquestionable truth of the apparitions.

APPENDIX II - THE MIRACULOUS HEALINGS

After June 13, 1917, during each of Her apparitions, Lucy passed on to Our Lady numerous requests for healings. «I will heal some of them, others no... Some of them I will heal», Our Lady answered.

From that moment on, She kept Her promises, and how generously! Very many extraordinary healings contributed to drawing pilgrims to the Cova da Iria. The first case Canon Formigao could investigate was that of Maria do Carmo. She was in the final stages of tuberculosis, and her condition grew worse from day to day. «She has no more than fifteen days to live!» the doctor had declared in July of 1917. She then promised to go on foot to Fatima on the thirteenth of each month to implore her own healing. From her village of Maceira (near Leiria) to the Cova da Iria, it was twenty-one miles. With a heroic courage, in spite of her

extreme exhaustion, she managed to go there on August 13, and again on September 13, and she began to feel better. On October 13, she went there again, under the pouring rain. At the moment of the apparition she felt completely healed. Although her healing was not as sudden as is required by the laws of discernment of a miracle set down by Benedict XIV, her healing was perfect and definitive.⁵³⁰

In 1923, in his small work, *Os acontecimentos de Fatima*, Canon Formigao already cites by name twenty-four cases of wonderful healings from 1917 to 1922. In 1927, the entire third part (pp. 301-394) of his great work, *As maravilhas de Fatima*, was devoted to “extraordinary healings”. From 1922 to 1942, the “Voice of Fatima” related more than eight hundred cases of healings. Some of them were so unquestionable that Bishop da Silva mentioned them in his letter, *A divina Providencia*, among the miracles which prove the authenticity of the apparitions.

THE SERVICE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE SICK

At Fatima, however, there existed no “bureau of medical evidence” comparable to the one at Lourdes. Dr. Pereira Gens, who founded and directed for a very long time the “Service of assistance to the sick”, explained in 1958 the reasons for this omission: «Very curiously, our primary and most considerable task, which took up the majority of our time and the most “personal”, if I can say so, is to care for the thousands of feet which were skinned and often seriously wounded. Innumerable are the pilgrims who take off their shoes, to walk barefoot the strip of over twelve miles that separates the nearest train station from the Cova da Iria. More numerous perhaps are those who come by automobile, and voluntarily stop their automobiles twelve, eighteen, or even twenty-five miles away to cover the distance barefoot.

Granted, the roads leading to Fatima have improved in recent years. And although the peasants’ feet, used to treading on bad roads from their earliest childhood, do not suffer too much from this trial, the same can hardly be said for the inhabitants of Porto, Lisbon, Evora or Coimbra.

«We have to struggle against infection, which is always possible, to close wounds which often are gaping, to make dressings for them, to break their blisters...

«As for the sick, properly speaking, there are about three to six hundred of these each month. And this in the space of a few hours! There are never enough of us to handle them. Add to this that the Portuguese people do not like very much... to go to the doctor; that the majority of these sick people have never even gone for a consultation, that therefore they are ignorant of the malady they are suffering from, and you will understand how delicate our situation is when we are asked about the healings taking place at the Cova. It is not even humanly possible for us to make each sick person undergo a clinical examination which would allow us to establish a formal diagnosis.»⁵³¹

Among the numerous cases of extraordinary healings mentioned by the pilgrims, usually the non-existence or insufficiency of an initial diagnosis makes official recognition of the miracle impossible.

However, in his book, *Miracles à Fatima*, Michel Agnellet presents twenty of the most diverse cases, for which we have available a solid medical dossier. Are examples needed?

«The healing of Miss Maria Augusta Dias, which took place on February 4, 1929, is particularly interesting (our author writes) in the sense that the greatest specialists of ophthalmology looked into her case, examined her, delivered detailed medical certificates, all concluding in the same sense; which really leaves no doubt about the causes and development of the sickness. The unanimous conclusion of these doctors is the following: Miss Dias is incurable. Her optic nerves are atrophied, she cannot see and will never see again. Yet, bathing her eyes three times in Fatima water instantaneously gave her perfectly normal vision!»⁵³²

Let us cite one more absolutely stupefying case, that of Margarida de Jesus Rebelo, healed on May 13, 1944. At the request of the Bishop of Guarda, her healing was made the object of a veritable thesis, published under the title: *Brilhante Milagre em Fatima*.⁵³³

It was a case of Pott's disease, in full bloom, attached to the spinal cord, that was confirmed by X-rays. In addition there was, near the kidney, an open, infected channel coming from an internal abscess (a fistula) which needed permanent drainage. And what happened? The patient who was totally paralyzed was instantly healed at the moment of Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. All at once the symptoms of her sickness disappeared. She was able to get up, walk

and feed herself. «All her functions were restored and the fistula, which had been secreting tubercular pus an hour before, disappeared; it had instantly closed up, leaving in its place clear, smooth skin.»⁵³⁴

THE MIRACLES AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC CONFIRMATION

In conclusion, let us quote an important note of Canon Barthas, published by Father Alonso: «For the sake of completeness, I must add that the holy Bishop of Leiria, Msgr. José da Silva, was not at all in favour of an official bureau for medical evidence. He did not see the need for it. He told me one day: “These brave people leave healed by Our Lady; they do not ask for anything else; nor does Our Lady. Why bother them with these interrogations, inquiries, etc?”»⁵³⁵ Regrettable negligence or supernatural wisdom? It is not for us to decide.

In any case, this absence of a service at Fatima capable of scientifically verifying miraculous healings from both a medical and canonical point of view, does not give us the right to ignore the fact that the healings were very numerous in the beginning. Although the majority of accounts reported in the “Voice of Fatima” since 1922 do not furnish material for a rigorous scientific demonstration for lack of sufficient medical dossiers, they nevertheless keep their value as precise testimony which, being published in a review with a circulation of three hundred thousand copies, could be verified by anyone who desired. And this guarantee is not negligible, for in many cases those who were close to the sick person were perfectly able to recognize an authentic, miraculous healing. If scientific demonstration proves the miracle, the impossibility of establishing it because of chance causes is not enough to deny the reality.⁵³⁶

CHAPTER IV

A TRIPLE MIRACLE: PORTUGAL, “SHOWCASE OF OUR LADY” (1931 - 1946)

«To express what has been going on here for twenty-five years, the Portuguese vocabulary has but one word: *miracle*.» Cardinal Cerejeira spoke these words on May 13, 1942, during the jubilee celebration of the apparitions. «Yes, we are firmly convinced that we owe the wonderful transformation of Portugal to the protection of the Most Holy Virgin.»⁵³⁷

I. A MIRACLE OF CONVERSION: AN ADMIRABLE CATHOLIC RENAISSANCE

This miracle of conversion was not something affirmed by the historians later on, in hindsight and after poring over the statistics. No, it was so evident that it even appeared to people of that time as a wonderful, unquestionable work of God. We must quote here the priceless testimony of Cardinal Cerejeira. He was pleased to recall that it was the sight of so many conversions that finally led him to believe in the apparitions of Fatima:

«I was one of those who did not believe in the miracle at the beginning. To me it seemed like a bad counterfeit of Lourdes. At the time I was at Coimbra, not far from Fatima, a professor at the Faculty of Letters at the University, where I taught history. People discussed the event passionately, but it did not interest me. I did not even read the accounts in the newspapers at that time, although the subject was of burning interest.

«Fatima, however, managed to overcome both the prudent reserve of the Church and the violent opposition of the jacobin government at that time. The pilgrimage continually grew. It produced more and more conversions of unbelievers, and there was talk of healings... From my house, tucked away in a corner of the university, when the twelfth and thirteenth would come during pilgrimage months, I would see continual processions of automobiles lasting for hours.

«This enthusiasm, which increased from year to year, although it lacked all external help, and was even opposed, along with the knowledge of miraculous facts and the abundance of spiritual fruits, began to shake my indifference...

«In 1928, I was elevated to the episcopate and assigned as auxiliary to my predecessor Cardinal Mendes Belo, Patriarch of Lisbon. There I began to see the fervour aroused in the parishes by devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. Some of my colleagues in the episcopate used to say to me: “Go to Fatima, sit down in a confessional and you will see.” Really, the Pentecost of conversions was obvious. As for myself, I will always remember a former fellow student at the Lyceum, a raving anticlerical who would go so far as to vociferate in the streets (against the clergy). About that time he came looking for me, to tell me that he had been converted at Fatima...»⁵³⁸

The Cardinal never ceased repeating that it was the miracle of conversions at work in Fatima – a miracle greater than the resurrection of the dead – which opened his eyes to Fatima.⁵³⁹

We would need a whole book to do justice to the extent of the religious renewal which Portugal experienced at that time. We will only give one proof, a proof which alone is sufficient because it never deceives: priestly and religious vocations. This is the infallible mark of the vitality of a Church, as John XXIII rightly observed.

THE SEMINARIES were filled at an astonishing speed. We can be brief because the figures are eloquent and dispense us from all commentary. In 1917, there were eighteen seminarians in the diocese of Portalegre. In 1929, when the bishop visited Pope Pius XI, there were one hundred and twenty, and four years later, in 1933, there were two hundred and one! In the little diocese of Leiria, at the arrival of Bishop da Silva in 1920, the seminary was closed. In 1933, it already numbered seventy-five seminarians. In the Catholic bastion of the North there was a veritable explosion of vitality. In 1933, there were four hundred and seventy-eight seminarians for the diocese of Braga alone!⁵⁴⁰

AND THE PRIESTS? The increase in their ranks is proportionate to the increased number of seminarians, which proves the good order and fervour of the seminaries, which were capable of leading the great majority of their students right up to the priesthood. Here the figures for 1917 must be compared with those of 1933. Here are the figures for 1933 and 1964, which if nothing else

show that the renewal stirred up by Fatima was not a flash in the pan: in 1933, the diocese of Braga numbered 2618 priests. It had 3188 in 1964. The province of Lisbon went from 950 priests to 1603. Even in the province of Evora in the South, the most dechristianized region of the country, the clergy still grew by about a hundred priests: 180 in 1933, 277 in 1964. On the average during these thirty years, the number of priests increased by twenty-five percent.⁵⁴¹

AS FOR THE RELIGIOUS, who were expelled by the revolution of 1910, and legally prohibited right up until 1926, counting all orders there were 370 for the entire country. By 1941, the Jesuits already numbered over 300, and the Catholic yearbook indicated a total of 1,321 professed religious. In other words, the number of religious almost quadrupled in ten years!

THE INCREASE IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES follows the same ascending curve. The example of the Dorothean Sisters, who welcomed Lucy, is significant. In 1917, they had just one establishment in Portugal, that of Asilo de Vilar, where the religious had been able to stay while donning secular clothes. «By 1934, they possessed fifteen great educational or charitable houses; and other foundations followed after that.»⁵⁴² The example of the “Sisters of Reparation of Our Lady of Sorrows of Fatima” should also be cited. This is the congregation founded by Canon Formigao. In short, orders of women experienced a magnificent restoration, in happy contrast to the sad years of the revolutionary torment. In 1941, Portugal numbered 3,815 professed nuns, and their number continued to grow right up until the recent decadence, whose causes we shall have to examine later on.

THE GREAT RENEWAL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE, of course, had many other aspects: development of the Catholic press, and radio, with the Catholic radio station “Radio Renaissance”, various pilgrimages, spiritual retreats, not to mention the success of a Catholic Action which had a colour all its own: firmly integrated into the framework of diocesan and parish life, consecrated by the bishops to the double cult of Christ the King and Our Lady of Fatima, it bore very little resemblance to Catholic Action in France or Belgium, which were supposedly specialized, but above all laicized, democratized, and already somewhat Marxist. The mere title of the great movement canonically erected in 1934 as an auxiliary to Catholic Action in Portugal gives away its spirit: “*The Pious Union of Crusaders of Fatima*”, which quickly garnered five hundred thousand members! *Devotion and crusade*, these were the two great poles of spirituality preached then, and with the greatest success! Without yet knowing it,

the Church was living fully the spirituality of the Secret of Fatima, and the people were as fiercely (and lucidly!) anti-communist as they were ardently devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The two go together, for there is no true love of God without the hatred of satan and his work in the world, and the effective desire to snatch from him, through a crusade, the multitude of poor souls enslaved by his domination.

To stir up «this admirable and prodigious renewal of religious life in souls» (the expression is Cardinal Cerejeira's),⁵⁴³ Our Lady of Fatima did not come to teach “new methods of the apostolate, more adapted to the modern mentality and culture.” No, She came to recall in all its vigour the most traditional Catholicism, that of the Gospel, the Catholicism of a St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort or a Saint Maximilian Kolbe, right in our twentieth century. This Catholicism consists in the love of God and the hatred of satan, meaning the love of the Cross and tender devotion to Mary, contempt for the world and self-renunciation, prayer and sacrifice, in short the divine eternal Wisdom in all its vigour, in all its force, and with all its supernatural attractions. This is the religion that converted and transformed Portugal to the point that in 1942, Cardinal Cerejeira could declare to a French journalist: «In the whole country, you could hardly manage to gather a handful of enemies of religion.»⁵⁴⁴ However, a few did indeed subsist, but since their social influence had become strictly proportional to their tiny number, they were neither persecuted nor molested, and they no longer counted.

“Miracle!” the bishops kept repeating during the jubilee of the apparitions in 1942: They declared:

«Anybody who would have closed his eyes twenty-five years ago and opened them now would no longer recognize Portugal, so vast is the transformation worked by the modest and invisible factor of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin at Fatima. Really, Our Lady wishes to save Portugal.»⁵⁴⁵

II. A MIRACLE OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

To save Portugal more effectively and durably, Our Lady of Fatima was not content with converting souls by leading each one to God individually. No, She wished to make this land of Portugal which was consecrated to Her once more, a

real country of Christendom again, where social and political life itself would be completely permeated by the great light of the faith and the energies of divine grace, through the ministry of the Church.

Pope Pius XII was not afraid to describe in eloquent terms this radical change in national life, designating Our Lady of Fatima as its original and true cause:

«In a tragic hour of darkness and distress, when the ship of the State of Portugal, having lost the guide of her most glorious traditions and driven off her course by anti-Christian and anti-national currents, seemed to be running for certain shipwreck, unconscious of present or future dangers whose gravity no one could humanly foretell; in that hour, Heaven, which foresaw these dangers, intervened, *and in the darkness light shone; out of chaos order reigned*; the tempest abated and faithful Portugal can renew *her glorious traditions* as a crusading and missionary nation...

«All honour to those who have been the instruments of Providence in this glorious enterprise!»⁵⁴⁶

This enterprise, which Salazar conducted with such clarity of purpose and courage, was in fact nothing less than an authentic restoration of Christendom. Again let us quote Pius XII, who said of the Portuguese one-man-ruler: «I bless him with all my heart, and I cherish the most ardent desires that he be able to complete successfully *his work of national restoration, both spiritual and material.*»⁵⁴⁷

The national restoration succeeded because it was first of all firm on principles. Salazar had a doctrine: a doctrine of Counter-Revolution, drawn from the best sources of the French masters, from Joseph de Maistre to La Tour du Pin to Charles Maurras. Only this doctrine was capable of saving his people from the Bolshevik Revolution.⁵⁴⁸

THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN AND THE REVOLUTION. Let there be no mistake. On May 13, 1931, fulfilling the requests of Heaven, the Portuguese bishops consecrated their country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that She might save it from communism which was taking root in Spain. It is not enough to say that it was She who worked this miracle of peace. We must describe how She did it, what means She used. For it would be unrealistic and childish to imagine that Heaven could intervene in political events against the course they

naturally would have taken, preserving Her people from the peril of the revolution, while leaving the country in the hands of a government which was moving full speed ahead towards that revolution.

If, as She announced in Her Secret, it is by the Communist Revolution that satan in our century spreads the errors that seduce nations, provoking wars and persecutions which ravage the world – when She wishes to save a people from this pestilence, She does it quite openly, raising up the only effective remedy: a true Catholic counter-revolution.

«THE NEW STATE» AGAINST THE REVOLUTION

Since 1928, the influence of Salazar within the government had progressively grown. On July 5, 1933, he became President of the Council. From then on, in spite of the republican appearance of the institutions, as head of the government he took sovereign direction of the nation. Prudently, slowly, but with invincible tenacity, he put his program into practice. What was this program? It was first of all and resolutely counter-revolutionary. This is what gave it its force and allowed the New State to subsist, rebuild and restore.⁵⁴⁹

“THE GREAT HERESY OF OUR TIME”: COMMUNISM. With a farsightedness rare for his time, Salazar denounced communism not as a resurgence of totalitarianism or enslavement or expansionism, of which Czarist Russia was commonly accused. No, he perceived that the evil was not Russia, but only anti-national communism. He wrote:

«In reality, Russian communism today represents neither a political regime nor an economic system: *it is a doctrine, a religion*. Through the mediation of its apostles and revolutionary agents, it pretends to replace by other conceptions those which the majority of civilized peoples have received more or less directly from Rome and Christianity, and this for the entire world. But it seems that very few realize to what extent the principles of the one and the other are irreconcilable.»⁵⁵⁰

In other words: it is clear that for Salazar communism is anti-civilization, anti-Christian, anti-Church and anti-Christ.

Communism is the revolution in its very essence:

«Communism is the synthesis of all the traditional revolts of matter against spirit, and of barbarism against civilization. *It is the “great heresy” of our time...* It tends to the subversion of everything, and in its destructive fury, it does not distinguish error from truth, good from evil, justice from injustice. Of little importance to it are the history and centuries-old experiences of humanity, the life and dignity of the intellect, the purest sentiments of the family, the honour of woman and her modesty, or the existence and grandeur of nations, as long as with its false conception of humanity it can succeed in man’s enslavement and his worst subjection.»⁵⁵¹

What head of State, what prince of the Church spoke about communism this clearly in 1936, even before the war in Spain broke out? As we will see, even Pope Pius XI himself had not yet done so, unfortunately for the Church and for Europe.

“AGAINST ALL THE GREAT HERESIES OF OUR TIMES.” But Salazar wisely did not stop at merely denouncing the communist peril only. If communism is the quintessence of evil, it is because it is the synthesis of all “the heresies” which have preceded it, prepared it and assured its victory.

Salazar did not commit the error of rising up against communism in the name of the Rights of Man and the absolute dignity of the person. No, it is because it destroys the family, undermines the country and wants to suppress God that communism is “intrinsically perverse”, as Pius XI was to say a year later. Salazar had understood this and explained it to eighty thousand Portuguese people who acclaimed him at Braga, in May 1936:

«We are thus against all the internationalisms, against communism, against socialism, against libertarian trade-unionism, *against everything which diminishes, divides or dissolves the family, against the class struggle, against those who are nationless and godless*, against the slavery of work, against the purely materialistic conception of life, against force as the origin of law. We are against all the great heresies of our times...»⁵⁵²

On the following page, he completes the list: «*We are anti-parliamentarian, anti-democratic, anti-liberal*, and we want to constitute a corporate State.»

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND ANTI-PARLIAMENTARIAN? Yes, because
«parliamentary democracy has resulted everywhere in instability and

disorder...» Because liberal democracy «has deprived us of some of the liberties we possessed and has shown itself incapable of assuring us of those which we were able to obtain. We are anti-democratic because our democracy, which in appearance depended on the people and claimed to represent it, reached the point where it remembered the people only at the moment of the elections; while as for us we want to elevate the people, educate them, protect them, and snatch them from the slavery of the plutocracy.

«If concern for the people occupies our heart and if we are the defenders of its continual ascent in the material and moral order, *this in no way implies an obligation for us to believe that the origin of power is found in the masses, and that the government can be the work of the multitude* and not of an elite upon which it is incumbent to direct the people and to *sacrifice itself for them.*»⁵⁵³ As Gonzague de Reynold said, Salazar bore his power «like a Christian carrying his cross.»

ANTI-LIBERAL? «We are against the great heresies of our time especially since we have never seen any evidence that the liberty to propagate such heresies has ever been a source of good; *this liberty which is being granted to the barbarians of modern times serves only to undermine the foundations of our civilization.*»⁵⁵⁴

«As far as we might be able to go in our tolerances towards the doctrinal divergences which on different points divide men, we are forced to say that *we do not recognize any liberty against the nation, against the common good, against the family, against morality.* On the contrary, we want the family and the school to indelibly imprint upon souls these high and noble sentiments which characterize our civilization, and the profound love of our country, as well as those who formed it and caused it to grow in the course of the ages.»⁵⁵⁵

In this spirit, Salazar dissolved Freemasonry in 1935. Freemasonry had continually fomented plots, perpetrated assassination attempts, and strove with all its might to overthrow the new State, to throw Portugal into the revolutionary struggle on the side of Red Spain.⁵⁵⁶ A symbolic event: on December 18, 1937, the “Portuguese Legion”, charged with spreading the nationalist and Catholic ideal of the new State, installed itself in the building of “Gremio Lusitano”, the former headquarters of all-powerful Freemasonry.⁵⁵⁷

«WE WANT TO CONSTITUTE A CORPORATE STATE»

The counter-revolution is only the negative side, but it is the first and indispensable step of the great work of restoration to be undertaken. All of Salazar's writings and actions lead us to declare that he conceived this restoration exactly as Saint Pius X did. The holy Pope stated:

«No, civilization is not something to be invented, nor is the new city to be built in the clouds. It has existed and still does; *it is Christian civilization, the Catholic city*. It needs only to be restored and continually renewed upon its natural and divine foundations...»⁵⁵⁸

Do not the great principles which Salazar proposes to us as foundations of the whole political edifice correspond to this ideal? The reader may judge for himself:

“GOD, COUNTRY, AUTHORITY, FAMILY, WORK.” «To souls torn by the doubt and negativism of this century we have tried to restore the consolation of the great certitudes. We have not put God or virtue open for discussion; we have not put our Homeland and its history open for discussion; we have not put authority and its prestige open for discussion; or the family and the morality proper to it, or the glory of work and the duty of working.»⁵⁵⁹

«... We want to construct the social and corporate State in close relation with the natural constitution of society: families, parishes, municipalities, corporations...»

To defend and restore these elementary societies that compose the nation, to represent them effectively with the government, such is the major concern animating Salazar's entire social policy. It is a Christian concern, which aims at nothing other than restoring the age-old Catholic order which once brought about the grandeur of Christendom.

For Salazar was very careful not to propose any half-baked ideal to his people. Catholicism, he said, can be replaced only by «vile counterfeits». From such pseudo-ideals he managed to jealously preserve his people, especially the youth. Concerning certain young nationalists he said:

«They wanted to live an intense, frenetic life. The grandiose and tumultuous demonstrations of German or Italian life, the style of Hitler or Mussolini, fascinate their imaginations. They wish that I could inflame them with a sort of sacred hatred, that I pit them fiercely against their enemies! This is not my goal: I want to normalize the nation.»

On another occasion he said to Henri Massis:

«We are living in lies, hyperboles. Great, systematic attempts are made to sow confusion in the soul of people, at the risk of handing them over to a fatal consumption!»

What clairvoyance, just two years before the slaughters of the World War! Salazar continues:

«For me, I have only one goal... What I propose *is to bring Portugal permanently to life!*»⁵⁶⁰

What wisdom! At the moment when everywhere Europe was being delivered over to fire and blood in the name of the most deadly policies transformed into a religion, the religion of the Rights of Man and democracy, or the religion of the State, of race and of blood – Salazar simply applied himself to procuring for his people this “tranquillity of order” which is the definition of peace. He saw his role exactly as Saint Paul defines it: the Apostle requests prayers «for kings and all those entrusted with authority, that we may *lead a calm and peaceful life in all piety and dignity*. For this is what is good and pleasing to God...»⁵⁶¹

This is Salazar’s ideal. Hence his misgivings towards too hasty an industrialization and modernization of life, and his hatred of the frenzied materialism of modern life:

«We want to preserve at any price, from this wave that is falling over the world, simplicity of life, purity of morals, gentleness of sentiments, the equilibrium of social relations, *this modest but noble family atmosphere which is proper to Portuguese life.*»⁵⁶²

But the national heritage is not just “this old patriarchal spirit” which efforts must be made to maintain, it is also a whole glorious past, it is the crusade, it is the great monarchs of the colonial and missionary epoch. And Salazar never fails

to exalt this great Catholic and royal tradition which he wants to renew.⁵⁶³

«THE CHURCH AND THE STATE HAPPILY COOPERATING»

This beautiful formula which we borrow from Saint Pius X in his “Letter on the Sillon”,⁵⁶⁴ expresses exactly what the reality was in Portugal for forty years.

Mutual help, concord and harmony, but never servile dependence, either in the sense of a caesaropapism which makes the Church a vassal to the political power, or in the sense of a clericalism which makes the Church intervene in strictly political decisions where neither faith nor morals are at stake.

Salazar detested all intrusion of the State in the affairs of the Church. He considered this the great lesson to be learned from the sad experience of the nineteenth century with its concordats.⁵⁶⁵ Before anything else he wished to leave the Church full and entire liberty of action, and not to enslave it on the pretext of coming to her aid materially. In Portugal, the clergy did not receive a salary from the State.

Moreover, to avoid a revival of anticlericalism, which was still virulent in a whole section of the city population, Salazar preferred to go very slowly. He did not want to give too much of a provocative ostentation to the clearly Catholic orientations of the new State. Thus a Concordat was not signed with the Holy See until 1940.

THE CONCORDAT OF MAY 7, 1940. Curiously, in this accord, the Catholic religion is not recognized as the official religion of the Portuguese State, and therefore in theory the separation of Church and State remains. We do not intend to go into this difficult debate here, which caused so much ink to flow in Portugal.

If perhaps this Concordat is not as doctrinally perfect as it might have been, it still guaranteed the Church a complete liberty, and on various points brought new and judicious solutions.

Thus on the subject of religious teaching: it is permitted to teach in all schools «the Catholic religion and morals to students whose parents or guardians have not requested to be dispensed from this teaching» (art. 21).⁵⁶⁶ And it makes it

clear that «in no case can this teaching be given by persons not approved as suitable by the ecclesiastical authority.»

With complete liberty, and besides that, subsidies granted to parochial schools, how could the Catholic education of all the youth be better favoured?

Another remarkable point: the legislation on marriage. «The Portuguese state recognizes the civil effects of marriages celebrated according to canonical laws.» Similarly in cases of annulments, the State recognizes the decisions of the Church (articles 22 & 25). Better still: «In harmony with the essential properties of Catholic marriage, it is understood that by the very fact of the celebration of a canonical marriage, the spouses renounce the legal right to ask for a divorce, which consequently cannot be applied by civil tribunals to Catholic marriages.» (art. 24)

This wise measure, it must be said, greatly contributed to the spiritual renewal of Portugal. Why? Because the number of Catholic marriages, far from diminishing due to the clause excluding the possibility of a future divorce, on the contrary steadily grew. In 1930, canonical marriages were 70.3 percent of the total. In 1960, they were 90.6 percent! Clearly, the number of divorces also diminished in proportion. At Braga, in 1960, no more than 0.6 percent of the marriages were civil ceremonies.⁵⁶⁷

In the very text of the Concordat, we could cite many other examples of the effective help which Salazar's State gave to the work of the Church, for the salvation of souls. Let us cite only the "Missionary Accord" which completed and added precisions to the Concordat for the territories of the immense Portuguese Empire. It is a magnificent text in which everything is conceived for the maximum development of the Catholic missions. Thanks to the help of the State, the missions could enjoy a practical monopoly on educational and charitable works in all the colonies of the country. Subsidies even for seminaries and novitiates, gratuitous concessions of necessary land, reimbursement of travelling expenses, pensions for all the personnel of the mission – nothing was forgotten which might favour the extension of the Kingdom of God.

This then is the magnificent work of political and social renewal accomplished in Portugal under the standard of Our Lady of Fatima. «*Salazar aids Fatima. Fatima aids Salazar*», wrote Gerard de Sede, to stir up the indignation of the reader. Little did the poor man realize how right he was! It was exactly as he had

said. In his station, and as far as possible, Salazar helped Our Lady of Fatima to save Portugal. But as we shall see, Our Lady returned the favour, helping Salazar face the storms in which, without the help and protection of the Church, he undoubtedly would have foundered along with his whole work, to Portugal's misfortune.

III. A MIRACLE OF PEACE: PORTUGAL PRESERVED FROM THE COMMUNIST TERROR (1936-1939)

In one of his discourses to the Portuguese people, Pope Pius XII evoked «the Red Peril, so menacing and so close to you, and yet avoided in such an unexpected manner.»⁵⁶⁸

MAY 13, 1936: THE RED PERIL AND THE SECRET VOW OF THE BISHOPS. Since 1934 it was at Fatima, near the sanctuary of Our Lady, that all the bishops of Portugal met each year to follow their spiritual exercises for ten days. When they met in May, 1936, *the events in Spain* were developing in an alarming manner: the elections of February 16, had been a success for the *Frente Popular*, foreboding a most ominous future. The Portuguese bishops watched with fright as their neighbouring country was falling into the abyss. Who could preserve their little homeland from this menacing wave of atheistic, antireligious communism? For Moscow's plan was well known and decided upon: according to Lenin's plans, communism had to be planted first in the Iberian peninsula. Caught between these two braziers of Russia and Spain, before long all of Europe would go up in flames.⁵⁶⁹

«With hearts full of preoccupation and anguish», as Cardinal Cerejeira wrote later on, on May 13, 1936, the bishops together made a solemn vow which they kept secret that year:

All of them, at least the bishops of continental Portugal promised «to come on May 13, 1938, to lead the national pilgrimage to solemnly give thanks to the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, in the name of the whole nation, if She obtained for Portugal victory over atheistic communism and the benefit of peace...»

As the Cardinal described it, «before separating from each other, more than once we placed our persons and our dioceses under the special protection of

the Most Holy Virgin, victorious over all heresies and Protectress of Portugal.»⁵⁷⁰

With great foresight, just as in 1931 – by way of contrast remember that in Paris at that time Cardinal Verdier had blessed the Popular Front! – the Portuguese bishops had seen the event coming: on July 13, 1936, two months after their vow, the assassination of the monarchist deputy Calvo Sotelo marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. The great Secret of July 13, 1917, had begun to be fulfilled to the letter: «Russia will spread its errors throughout the world, raising up wars and persecutions against the Church. The good will be martyred...»

The threat to Portugal was grave, and humanly speaking it was almost inevitable that the revolutionary contagion spread to the nation. This in fact is what happened.

AN ATTEMPT AT SEDITION. On September 8, 1936, two warships, the dispatcher *Albuquerque* and the destroyer *Dao* mutinied to join the Reds in Spain. Salazar firmly ordered that they be bombarded until they either surrendered or sank. He declared: «the ships of the Portuguese Navy may sink but they will never hoist another flag than that of Portugal.»⁵⁷¹

It was a salutary decision. Salutary, because the mutineers were quickly brought to their senses and the nation escaped the conflagration of the Revolution. But let us hasten to add that if Salazar could act so effectively, it was because he had the firm support of a hierarchy which publicly supported him and morally justified his action. Thus the bishops brought up the event in one of their pastoral letters:

«However, the enemies of peace do not disarm. One day the following September, the day dedicated to the Nativity of Our Lady – even before the capital perceived the danger – a revolutionary movement got under way, which was quickly snuffed out. Thus Portugal could continue in tranquillity on the path of work and progress...

«And we, whose hands are innocent of all the blood shed in Portugal by the spirit of rebellion, can rejoice unreservedly in the victory of the (social) order in which the Church teaches respect for men, and without which there can be neither progress nor liberty.»⁵⁷²

On May 13, 1937, in a new pastoral letter in which they vigorously denounced communism and the satanic hatred animating it, they informed the faithful of their secret vow of 1936, and they mentioned the horrors of the persecution in Spain.

AN ATTEMPT ON SALAZAR'S LIFE. «On Sunday, July 4, 1937, at 10:30 a.m., as Salazar was on his way as usual to the private chapel of a friend's house, Dr. José Trocado, at avenue Barbosa du Bocage, there was a violent explosion the moment he got out of the car. Ten feet away from the leader of the Government, a powerful bomb hidden in an iron case had just exploded.

«Salazar was not touched, his chauffeur was rendered deaf and nothing more.

«To the passers-by gathering around him, Salazar simply said: "Calm down!" and to his host: "Let's go to Mass." After the Mass, when everybody was insisting that he rest, he answered: "No. Since God has not willed that I die, I will work."»⁵⁷³

The bishops were quite conscious that their country owed the preservation of interior peace to the political wisdom and energy of Salazar, and were not afraid to recognize it publicly. The assassination attempt, if successful, would have certainly thrown the country once more into trouble and dissensions. In its failure they saw the mark of divine protection. Here is how they recalled the event in their collective letter of 1938:

«A few months go by and in the dark shadows, in cold blood and with a diabolical precision, they plot against the life of the man who, more than anyone else, has the duty of watching over the peace and security of all and who, in the august office of President and revered head of State, has merited so much gratitude from the Portuguese nation.

«*But the almighty hand of Providence averted the blow* which criminal hands had prepared with such skill and planning, the success of which they thought was scientifically assured.»⁵⁷⁴

MAY 13, 1938: THE RENEWAL OF THE NATIONAL CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY: At the beginning of 1938, the

crusade of General Franco was on its way to victory and all danger had finally been averted for Portugal, which fortunately escaped the revolutionary contagion. While announcing the great national pilgrimage of May 13, Cardinal Cerejeira solemnly thanked Our Lady of Fatima for it:

«Having arrived almost at the point of fulfilling our vow, our heart exults with joy seeing that our trust in the Patroness of Portugal has not been disappointed.

«Since Our Lady of Fatima appeared in 1917... a special blessing of God has descended on the land of Portugal... Especially if we review the two years which have gone by since our vow, one cannot fail to recognize that the invisible hand of God has protected Portugal, sparing it the scourge of war and the leprosy of atheistic communism.

«*The blessing of peace* which the Church requests so insistently in its liturgical prayers, and which we had confidently requested at Fatima, *has been granted to us almost miraculously.*»⁵⁷⁵

On May 13, 1938, five hundred thousand pilgrims surrounded the country's twenty bishops who were present at the Cova da Iria. The national consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was renewed, while in all the churches of the country millions united themselves to this act in prayer. As was already the case in 1931, the urgent supplication was combined with thanksgiving: two months earlier Hitler had invaded Austria and the most lucid minds saw the great world conflict tragically approaching. Would Spain and Portugal manage to preserve their neutrality? Nothing was more uncertain. Already during the First World War, the government at Lisbon had been unable to resist the general trend. What would happen then in a new war, where pressure from the belligerents would undoubtedly be stronger? Heaven wished to inform its messenger before the events, so as to add *an unquestionable prophecy* to the miraculous protection which would be granted to the little nation consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

A WONDERFUL PROMISE OF PEACE

On February 6, 1939, seven months before the declaration of war, Sister Lucy wrote to her bishop, Msgr. da Silva. At the same time she informed him that the

war was imminent, she informed him of a miraculous promise: *in this horrible war Portugal would be spared because of the national consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary made by the bishops.*⁵⁷⁶

This is a little known point in the message of Fatima, but one having decisive importance in the eyes of Sister Lucy, who has never ceased to recall it. For example, on August 18, 1940, she writes in a letter to Father Gonçalves:

«The proof that God gives us (Sister Lucy is writing in reference to the request for the consecration of Russia to obtain its conversion and world peace) is *the special protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary over Portugal, due to its consecration to Her.* Those people whom you write to me about have a good reason to be scared (of the war). All this would have happened to us, had our bishops not paid attention to the requests of our Good Lord, and prayed with all their heart for His mercy and the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»⁵⁷⁷

Sister Lucy made sure to mention this prophecy of peace for Portugal in the letter she wrote to Pope Pius XII on December 2, 1940. This illustrates how important it was to her in the whole message of Fatima. She wrote:

«Most Holy Father, Our Lord promises *a special protection to our country in this war*, due to the consecration of the nation, by the Portuguese Prelates, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; as *proof* of the graces that would have been granted to other nations, had they also consecrated themselves to Her.»⁵⁷⁸

A more precise, clearer and more firm prophecy could hardly be made. But what actually happened? The prediction was fulfilled to the letter.

PORTUGAL PRESERVED FROM WAR (1939-1945)

If we speak of a “miracle of peace”, it is not through a manner of speaking, merely designating one of those happy events which was unexpected. Indeed here there is much more, and to be convinced of it one need only recall the historical circumstances.

From the beginning of the war the threat was great. A first notable fact which

was decisive: it is surely thanks to their Catholic wisdom, which strengthened and doubled their political prudence, that Salazar and Franco escaped all ideological frenzy. They also avoided all territorial ambitions, even those which in themselves were possible or legitimate – take Gibraltar for example! – and all vain hopes of entering the war to profit by it. Franco however, who had obtained his victory over the Reds only thanks to the effective help of Italy and Germany, after being faced with an odious betrayal from the French and English, quite naturally could have entered the war on the side of the Axis. Hitler, moreover, was counting on this participation of Spain in his struggle.

THE FRANCO-SALAZAR AGREEMENT. In the frenzy which suddenly overtook Europe in the name of “the Crusade of the democracies” or totalitarian ideologies, Franco and Salazar were able to keep their composure and consider only the good of their peoples. Overcoming the old antagonism between their two nations, they decided to act together to preserve their neutrality at all costs. This close cooperation, fixing a common policy for the peninsular bloc, was the indispensable condition for the maintenance of peace.

But this cooperation was not enough. The future also depended – especially depended – on the reaction of the belligerents. Could Salazar resist the repeated solicitations of the Allies to occupy the strategic position of the Azores? Would not the age-old alliance with England come into play again, as in 1916-1918?

THE GERMAN THREAT. The danger from Germany was much greater still. When, during the summer of 1940, Franco sent Serrano Suner to Berlin to sound out the positions of the Fuhrer, the news he reported back to Madrid was alarming: the Germans counted on the installation of a base in the Canaries, and German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop envisaged an invasion of Spain if the Spanish refused his requests.⁵⁷⁹

To induce Spain to enter the war, Hitler organized the famous interview which took place at Henday, on October 23, 1940. He then explained his plan to Franco: to conquer England he needed to take Gibraltar so as to deny the British access to the Mediterranean and secure for Germany bases which would control North Africa. To this end Hitler proposed an immediate alliance to Franco, with Spain entering the war in 1941.

With extraordinary skill, Franco managed to promise nothing. Of course he provoked the impatience of Hitler and Ribbentrop’s furor. But not to the point of

drawing reprisals. His biographer notes that he managed «to avoid the explosion which the Germanic legions would have hurled upon Spain. However this danger remained latent.»⁵⁸⁰

A few weeks later, there was new German pressure and a new setback for Germany. Finally, on December 7, 1940, Hitler informed Franco through Admiral Canaris of his plan to launch an assault against Gibraltar. For the operation, which was scheduled for January 10, 1941, he requested free passage for his troops on Spanish territory. The German high command had conceived a detailed plan for the invasion of the peninsula. Portugal was not spared. In fact, to achieve mastery of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and to prevent landings by the British, Portuguese ports would have to be occupied.

“Operation Felix” was to result in the occupation of Portuguese territory. «Marshal Blaskowitz received command of the invasion troops numbering eight divisions; an air force of two thousand airplanes was to be entrusted to General Richthofen. A “Panzer division” under the command of General Schmidt was to launch an attack from Caceres in Spain directly towards Lisbon and Porto to occupy Portugal... The danger was so great that everything was ready for the Portuguese government to transfer its headquarters to the Azores.» On December 31, 1940, Hitler was able to write to Mussolini: «We have made all the preparations to cross the Spanish border on January 10 and to take Gibraltar by mid-February.»⁵⁸¹

Fortunately, Franco once again had the courage and daring to oppose the plan. But what then prevented the Fuhrer from moving forward anyhow, since all his plans were set, he had all the means at that time to fulfil them, and the outcome of the war depended on it? It is a mystery.⁵⁸²

AN INTERVENTION OF HEAVEN. Without falling into an annoying “coincidentalism”, that is, the tendency to link supernatural events with the vicissitudes of political events in too close and “mechanical” a way – for political events are always complex and subject to chance in their details because they result for the most part from the free will of men – is it not interesting to note that at the very moment when the fate of the peninsula was being decided, at the beginning of December, 1940, Heaven intervened once more?

In fact, at the request of Sister Lucy, all the Portuguese bishops met at the Cathedral of Lisbon on December 8, 1940, on the occasion of the feast of the

Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Kingdom. There they solemnly renewed the consecration of their homeland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁵⁸³

AN UNEXPECTED DELIVERANCE. Curiously, after this rebuff from Franco, Hitler hesitated. He thought that perhaps Mussolini would be able to convince the inflexible Spaniards. Thus a meeting between the two took place, but in vain: Franco committed himself to nothing and even managed to get Il Duce to justify his position to Hitler.

Before long, when Germany had to come to Mussolini's aid in the Balkans, and then mobilize for the eastern front, the most menacing danger was removed for good.

Thus did Portugal and Spain remain at peace, without losing an inch of territory. In 1946, during the great solemnity of the three hundredth anniversary of Portugal's consecration to the Immaculate Conception and for the crowning of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, Pius XII explained to the Portuguese people the supernatural meaning of the peace they had enjoyed:

«The most horrible war that ever desolated the world has raged around your borders but has not crossed them *thanks especially to Our Lady, who was watching over you and your leaders* from Her throne of mercy, which has been erected here like a sublime watchtower in the centre of the country, and did not permit the war to touch you, giving you only an inkling of the unprecedented calamities from which Her protection preserved you.»⁵⁸⁴

“A SPECIAL PROTECTION OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY” (SISTER LUCY). Of course, it would be false to believe that this peace was a pure gift from Heaven, acting alone and without intermediaries. Men and circumstances made it possible. First of all there was the wisdom of Salazar and Franco,⁵⁸⁵ and their solid concord which formed the unity of the Iberian bloc. There was also their remarkable diplomatic skill, strengthened by that of Marshal Petain at Montoire. Then finally there was the astonishing blindness of Hitler, who by giving up on control of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean undoubtedly committed his gravest strategic error.

These are secondary causes, all independent of the others, but all contributed to safeguarding the peace. This peace had been predicted by Sister Lucy even before hostilities broke out. It is not arbitrary, therefore, to recognize in it the

work of a benevolent Providence and the fulfilment of the promise of Our Lady of Fatima. Her special protection for Portugal, which was consecrated to Her, extended also to Franco's Spain, purified by the blood of its innumerable martyrs. During this war, and through Sister Lucy, Our Lady had also addressed to Spain Her requests and promises for hastening its religious rebirth and to preserve it from new chastisements.⁵⁸⁶

THE MIRACLE RECOGNIZED AND PROCLAIMED

The Portuguese, it goes without saying, were fully conscious of the immense grace, the real miracle of peace with which they had been favoured. Let us quote Cardinal Cerejeira once again. On February 11, 1942, speaking in the name of all the Portuguese bishops, he declared:

«Through a true miracle of love, the Mother of God continues to preserve our country and keep it unharmed *like a fragile vessel miraculously saved*, in the midst of tempests and perils which are apparently insurmountable. Once again, we come to recall to you this debt of gratitude to our glorious Patroness, for the peace which we enjoy – *a true miracle which astonishes the world* – is to us a testimony and pledge of Her patronage on high.»

He continued:

«It would be unjust to fail to recognize *the vigilant and patriotic action of our rulers...* But there is not a single Portuguese person in good faith who does not recognize in our privileged situation a reflection of this light which the Most Holy Virgin came to spread at Fatima... It suffices to contemplate the extraordinary element in all this to feel and recognize that a higher power is at work and that *a tender and merciful Heart watches over Portugal with love.*»⁵⁸⁷

Let us quote the most authoritative testimony from Salazar himself. Far from attributing to himself the merit of preserving the peace, he declared on May 7, 1945, with that discretion and modesty which were usual with him when he expressed his Faith in his official discourses:

«Providence has willed, in its high designs, that we pass through the conflict without being involved in it actively and directly...» He concluded:

«Let us bless the victory! I will say nothing more on it. In this hour so solemn, not to say sacred, *I feel and sense in me only a strong sentiment of gratitude to Providence for its Mercy*, and prayers that its Light illumine the men responsible for the destiny of the world.»⁵⁸⁸

Like his friend, Cardinal Cerejeira, or like Pope Pius XII, from whom we will quote some admirable texts from 1942, proclaiming «the atmosphere of a miracle which envelops Portugal», Salazar recognized the apparitions of Fatima as the primary source of all the temporal and spiritual benefits heaped upon his country since 1917.⁵⁸⁹

To an American journalist who in 1946 questioned him about Russia, Salazar gave the following response, a remarkable one because it takes us back to the very heart of the Secret of Fatima: «According to what we know of the interior affairs of Russia, a revolution there appears improbable for the moment. But there is a hope for peace: *that Providence will do in Russia what it did here, in Portugal.*»⁵⁹⁰

PORTUGAL, “SHOWCASE OF OUR LADY”

The great design of God for our century was just that: He willed that the Immaculate Heart of Mary convert the immense land of Russia, as it converted in wonderful fashion the little country of Portugal. In the tragic history of our bloody century – polluted and perverted by the errors, wars and persecutions stirred up by the anti-Christ powers of Bolshevik communism and plutocratic and liberal Freemasonry, during more than forty years Portugal has stood out like an island of Christendom restored, full of wisdom and peace. This wonderful miracle lasted exactly as long as the Pastors of the Church remained unanimously faithful to the requests and the Spirit of the message of Fatima, as to a great supernatural charter of the Portuguese rebirth.

If the “Portuguese miracle” has gradually lost its lustre, if it has been sadly obscured for twenty years, it is to the exact extent that the authentic message of the Immaculate Virgin has been betrayed, distorted or forgotten in favour of a new message and another spirit, which have everywhere entailed the decadence of the Church and the ruin of Catholic societies.

However, we must be careful not to project upon the past history the sad

vagaries of the present. For the present has not entirely abolished the past and we are certain it will be ephemeral. We must not forget the triple miracle worked by Our Lady in Portugal in response to the Act of Consecration to Her Immaculate Heart by all the bishops of the country. For this is the proof of the all-powerful mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to convert souls and grant peace to the nations. Yes, let us perpetuate the remembrance of these wonders of grace, which made Portugal as it were the “showcase of Our Lady”, to repeat the beautiful expression of the Abbé de Nantes. For Portugal is the striking demonstration of what would have taken place half a century ago throughout the world, if the requests of the Queen of Heaven had been fulfilled at the hour willed by God...

But, because His Mercy cannot be overcome by the tardiness and resistance of men, because His great design «to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary» is irrevocable, the “Portuguese miracle” continues to be a pledge of hope for us:

«Fatima speaks not only to Portugal but to the whole world. We believe that the apparitions of Fatima open a new era: that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

*«What has taken place in Portugal proclaims the miracle. And it foreshadows what the Immaculate Heart of Mary has prepared for the world.»*⁵⁹¹

**SECTION II: A great design of mercy: the salvation of Christendom
through the conversion of Russia.**

CHAPTER V

«POOR RUSSIA»: FROM CHRISTENDOM TO THE HELL OF THE GULAG (1917 - 1931)

While at Fatima, from May 13 to October 13, the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary appeared to Her three shepherds and set up the throne of Her Mercy at the Cova da Iria, to make Portugal during forty years the most blessed country under Heaven – at the same moment at the other end of Europe, Russia wallowed in the Bolshevik revolution, the most horrible revolution ever seen, and also the most dangerous and frightful one for all Christendom.

RUSSIA IN THE MYSTERY OF FATIMA

1917: only one date for these two events, undoubtedly the most important and decisive ones of our century. The coincidence is especially remarkable because Our Lady of Fatima, on July 13, looking very sad and afflicted, spoke with the three children about the fate of this poor Russia, on whose fate also depended the fate of the rest of the world.

The coincidence of the dates is so visibly providential that since then all historians have commented on it, but it is important to grasp its real significance. Must we, with several authors,⁵⁹² present the events of Fatima side by side with those of Moscow in parallel portraits, giving between the account of each apparition the corresponding episode of the Bolshevik revolution? No. For the message concerning Russia is part of the great Secret, which Our Lady asked the children to reveal to no one. And, in fact, Lucy did not say a word about Russia until 1929. Thus the chronological parallel linking month by month the events in Moscow and Fatima during 1917 is practically insignificant, and usually arbitrary. On the contrary, this long silence of Heaven – a silence which was willed and deliberate, since the Blessed Virgin spoke of it, but did not want Her words revealed until a dozen years later, in the bloodiest years of Stalin's persecutions – we must now explain, drawing from it the most salutary lessons.

In short, it is useless to seek in the Secret of Fatima the key to various episodes which culminated in the "October Revolution". But on the other hand, it is rather

the history of Soviet tyranny from 1917 to 1929 which allows us to understand the true meaning of both the great Secret, which ought to have been revealed sometime between 1927 and 1930, and the great revelation of Tuy in 1929. We must have in our minds this first decade of the Soviet Gulag to discover the immense and infinite wisdom of the great plan of God revealed at Tuy... and to understand how easy it was, at that time, for the Pastors of the Church to accomplish, as good children of Our Lady, Her little requests.

Yes, it would have been easy to obey and to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but only on the condition of making the same judgment as Heaven concerning “poor Russia”, its thousands of martyrs, its millions of victims, and their persecutors, the cold-blooded butchers, the Lenins, Trotskys and Stalins, all of whom had blood on their hands.

This preliminary condition remains today: we can understand nothing either of the drama of our century, or the response brought to it by Our Lady of Fatima, so long as we do not recognize the true nature of communism. Only an authentic history, stripped of all “whitewashing” and fallacious ideological pretexts lets us discover, to our horror, that *since 1917 Bolshevik Russia is a veritable hell*; yes, literally. Are all its atrocities known to us? Perhaps. Are we aware that Bolshevism created sixty million victims in Russia? Yes, but that is said too quickly. Because we do not “realize” everything that this represents in hatred and satanic complicity, as well as atrocious suffering, we do not learn from all the consequences which follow from it, and we do not understand the means chosen by Heaven to save this «poor Russia», as Our Lord would later say while speaking to Sister Lucy, in a tone of immense compassion.



Sculpture at the Cabeço recalling the third apparition of the Angel, in the autumn of 1916. Lucy, Jacinta and Francisco are in prayer before the Angel, who presents the Holy Eucharist to them.



Our Lady of Fatima showing Her Immaculate Heart surrounded by thorns. This statue by José Ferreira Thedim was offered to the Carmel of Coimbra shortly after Sister Lucy entered it on Holy Thursday, 1948.



The “Capelinha”, or little chapel, built at the beginning of the pilgrimage, over the very place of the apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin. Today it is located under a vast shelter accessible to over one million pilgrims.



Sister Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart (Sister Lucy), photographed at Fatima during the pilgrimage of Pope Paul VI on May 13, 1967. She entered the Carmel of Coimbra on Holy Thursday, 1948, and is still there as of this writing (1983).

I. FROM “HOLY RUSSIA” TO THE REVOLUTION: A TOTAL RUPTURE

Indeed one of the first important truths which must be solidly established, under pain of dangerously deceiving ourselves concerning Russia and communism, and consequently the words of Our Lady of Fatima as well, is that the Bolshevik

revolution is not Russian. It is fundamentally, essentially anti-Russian, as Solzhenitsyn has never tired of demonstrating to the West, which has voluntarily blinded itself on this point.⁵⁹³ Already in 1976, against all those who tended to present the Soviet Gulag as the authentic heir of Czarist Russia, the Abbé de Nantes insisted forcefully:

«The Bolshevik phenomenon developed like a cancer on the body of “Holy Russia”. It remains totally foreign to it. Neither the orthodox religion nor Slavic tradition have the least affinity with its inhuman dialectic. And if communism took possession of this country, it is not in virtue of an illusory “historical dialectic”, but quite simply because this great body with a sick head was easier to take and, undoubtedly, had no other agitating minority beside the Jewish Bolshevik clan. Not only is the Soviet power the enemy of the human race, it is before all else the enemy of the Russian people and the other enslaved peoples.»⁵⁹⁴

But did not the Czars, by their oriental tyranny, at least open the way for Bolshevism? This has been stated and repeated many times; but wrongly:

«Everything in our history books is written to give us the impression that they provoked the dissatisfaction of their people by their autocratic ways, by their harshness, their lack of ability, their religious fanaticism, their social injustice, their immobilism in economic matters, until finally the general revolution drove them out. Nothing is more false...

«During this dramatic nineteenth century, the Czars of Russia lived as good and honest princes, concerned with the good of their peoples. They all assumed their mission as representatives of God over the land of Russia, and defenders of the orthodox peoples.»⁵⁹⁵

Their only error, their sole fault faced with the menacing revolution, which moreover was foreign in inspiration, was their excess of liberalism, their lack of foresight and firmness in extirpating the evil before it was too late. As for Nicholas II, at the beginning of this twentieth century, he was surely the most humane head of State, the most loyal to his allies, the one most concerned for the good of his people, and the most profoundly Christian as well. Between him and Lenin there is as radical a break as between Louis XVI and Robespierre.

Thus the evil did not come fundamentally from Russia or its Czarist regime, it

came from elsewhere... Bolshevism is the revolution in its very essence, pushed to its most logical term in an implacable manner. This is what created the force and particularly frightful character of that “October Revolution”. This is the revolution whose irreversible success and universal triumph Lenin – inspired by what spirit we can guess – prophesied.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE

The events are well known. We will recall only those which will be useful in the development of our exposition. The insurrection broke out at Petrograd in February, 1917. On March 15, Nicholas II felt obliged to abdicate. The insurgents then formed a provisional government presided over by Prince Lvov, who soon committed the infamous crime of arresting the royal family. In April, Lenin, who had taken refuge in Switzerland, returned to Russia in a railroad car sealed with lead, under the protection of the German government. Thanks to the gold of Kaiser William II and the financial help of the Jewish bankers in New York, Bolshevik propaganda intensified. At that time, the Party had seventeen daily papers at its disposal, with a total circulation of 320,000 copies.⁵⁹⁶

In July, there was a new revolutionary insurrection. Lenin however hesitated, and the attempt to seize power failed. Yet the decision was made: the armed insurrection would take place «when circumstances dictate it to us, but by autumn at the latest».⁵⁹⁷ Prince Lvov resigned and the freemason and democrat Kerensky replaced him in the provisional government. In September, after some new military defeats, General Kornilov wanted to seize power, but Kerensky dismissed him. Kornilov then sent his troops marching on St. Petersburg. Then Kerensky, pushing stupidity and treason to the extreme, called the Soviet to his aid! Thus the Bolsheviks took leadership of the resistance to Kornilov’s army. Kornilov then saw the majority of his troops abandon him, to go over to the side of the revolutionaries. Kerensky was able to proclaim the republic on September 14, but he was now without authority. After the Soviet of St. Petersburg rallied over to the Bolsheviks (on September 13) and that of Moscow imitated it shortly after, the days of Kerensky’s government were numbered.⁵⁹⁸

On October 25, the revolution triumphed and the Bolsheviks occupied the winter palace. The infernal machine functioned flawlessly and in record time: the legitimate national monarchy, paternalistic and of divine right, was overthrown in the name of liberty and democracy, with the subsidies of the German enemy

and the complicitous apathy of the allies. Eight months later, the incapable and impotent liberal republic had to give way to the Bolshevik dictatorship.

II. LENIN: THE TERROR IS INSTALLED (1917-1924)

After a few weeks of debauchery, at the end of 1917, misery began to be felt, with disorganized transport, unemployment and civil war taking the place of foreign war.

THE PERSECUTIONS BEGIN...

On January 20, 1918, a decree «proclaims the separation of Church and State, confiscation of the goods of the Church and the suppression of its legal rights». ⁵⁹⁹ In fact the persecutions, which had begun in October, continued afterwards more or less virulently whenever the Bolsheviks had the opportunity.

Religious persecution! Yes, first and above all, because religion is the most hated, detested enemy. But Bolshevik hatred extends well beyond that: communism in its origin and roots is «a ferocious atheism», as Solzhenitsyn writes. But «it is accompanied with a permanent unlimited fury against everything which is not itself, which existed before it and tries to survive beside it, without it, in spite of it. It is the “jacobin terror” radicalized, universalized, eternalized.» ⁶⁰⁰

THE MARTYRDOM OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY

«The unfading honour of the last of the Romanovs was to have perished in this torment, the Czar, the Czarevich and the Czarevnas, for their fidelity to their God, their nation and their allies...

«As prisoner of the Bolsheviks, or more precisely a handful of Jewish revolutionaries, the imperial family manifested the greatest nobility of sentiments, the most lively Orthodox piety, the most profound attachment to the Russian people and even the Czarina Alexandra who had refused exile, declared herself inviolably attached to the soil of her native country. They were all massacred with the last of their servants during the night of July 16-17, 1918, at Ekaterinburg, by a group of supposed German prisoners, in

reality Jewish assassins sent by Moscow. You will not find any of these details in your Heller and Nekrich in spite of its 658 pages (cf. p. 55). Of course! But we learned them from a Swiss gentleman, a witness of the intimate life and final days of Czar Nicholas Romanov and his family.⁶⁰¹ It is edifying. We have good reason to conclude that they were killed by diabolical men, out of hatred for the Christian faith and the Russian nation.»⁶⁰²

«THE WAY OF TERROR»

The liberty which had been announced immediately turned into organized, systematic terror: Lenin declared at the time that «*the way of terror* is the only one open to us and we cannot avoid it. Do you imagine that without the brutal, uninhibited revolutionary terror, it would be possible for us to prevail?»⁶⁰³

In October, 1917, the peasants had been granted the lands of the rich proprietors. Now however, all the harvests from these lands were being requisitioned, and everywhere the peasants attempted to revolt. On August 9, Lenin decided «*to put into effect a pitiless mass terror*». At that moment concentration camps were created, where adversaries of the regime whom the secret police had not yet shot down perished by the tens of thousands. People of influence, peasants, soldiers, anyone who seemed capable of putting up any opposition to Bolshevism was eliminated without pity.⁶⁰⁴

In November 1919, Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow addressed a pathetic appeal to Europe: «Bishops, priests, monks and nuns are shot down *en masse* under the vague pretext of “counter-revolution”. Through a refinement of cruelty the supreme consolation of the sacraments is refused them, while their relatives cannot obtain a Christian burial for their bodies.»⁶⁰⁵

In 1922, Cardinal Mercier published the first figures:

«Statistics for the victims of the persecution are frightening. Since November 1917, 260,000 simple soldier prisoners and 54,000 officers; 18,000 landed proprietors; 35,500 “intellectuals”; 192,000 workers; 815,000 peasants; 28 bishops and 1,215 priests were put to death.

«To these last figures we must add an as yet unknown number of priests

both orthodox and Catholic who were condemned and executed these last months for refusing to cooperate with the decree ordering the confiscation of sacred objects.»⁶⁰⁶

In fact, a decree of February 26, 1922, confiscated all the treasures of the Church, including consecrated objects. The faithful attempted to oppose it.

In three months, «1,414 bloody incidents were recorded, brushes between the faithful and the troops». Lenin took advantage of this to give his instructions to all members of the Politburo: «This is precisely the best time to give a lesson to this whole breed so that for several years, they do not even think any more of any sort of resistance.»

«We must arrest as many as possible of the “representatives of the reactionary bourgeoisie and the reactionary clergy”, have a show trial, and shoot down “a very great number”... In all 8,100 priests, monks and nuns were shot in 1922.»⁶⁰⁷

This frightful slaughter was the effect of cold calculation, an implacable and lucid decision: in May 1922, when he became aware of the first projects of the Soviet penal code, Lenin insisted without pity: «*Jurisprudence must not put an end to the terror*; to promise that would be tantamount to blinding ourselves or deceiving others; it must provide a foundation for it and legalize it in principle, without any falsehood.»⁶⁰⁸

ANOTHER MEANS OF EXTERMINATION: FAMINE

During this time, for almost two years the population had been decimated by a terrible famine for which drought had not been the only cause. The revolution had seriously disorganized all agrarian life: innumerable peasants had been deported or massacred. The forced requisition of all harvests in 1918, 1919 and 1920 had discouraged them from continuing to sow, and work purely for the profit of the Red Army and the members of the Party. The factories and transports no longer functioned except sporadically.

In 1921, the misery became frightful: no more food, no more clothing, no more fuel. At St. Petersburg, wooden houses were being burned by the thousands with no end in sight. In the hospitals there was no longer any medicine, or nurses or

doctors. Father d'Herbigny wrote in 1923:

«A witness of recent events affirmed however that they continued to dump innumerable dying people: the families got rid of them to escape contagion, or simply to avoid seeing their horrible agonies. All categories of the sick are gathered in the same rooms. In their midst are long chests, always open, which receive the cadavers to the extent that deaths continue: they are filled, gorged, stuffed with them. Each day a team passes by to load them onto trucks; another comes by a few hours later bringing back the chests – the same chests, not disinfected – to receive a new load.

«There are no more funerals or even burials. It would take too long to bury all these bodies. The rivers carry many of them away. It is said that they are even used, “temporarily, as long as the famine demands”, to fatten the pork.» With the permission of the Moscow government.⁶⁰⁹

«At the end of the Civil War, and as its natural consequence, an unprecedented famine developed in the Volga area... to the point of cannibalism.»⁶¹⁰

And now a horrible fact which defies all imagination: this famine, which in 1922 had already created ten million victims, was an integral part of the Bolshevik plan. In September 1918, Zinoviev, the intimate friend of Lenin who had returned to Russia with him in the famous sealed boxcar, declared and wrote: «We will prevail; of the Russian people, 90 million are under the power of the Soviets. The rest? We will exterminate them.»⁶¹¹ It must be understood that the empire of the Czars numbered almost 180 million souls. The war and the cruelty of the State had reduced the population to about 130 million. Well, there were still about 40 million Russians too many! In 1918, one could read the following words in the official organ of the Soviet of Petrograd:

«We will render our hearts cruel, harsh, without pity. We will open the dams of this bloody sea. Without pity, without mercy, we will kill our enemies by the thousands. We will drown them in their own blood.»⁶¹²

But hunger executes more quickly than the machine gun. It makes less noise and requires less procedure. Heller and Nekrich rapidly pass over such horrors. We must read the overwhelming account in the work of Father d'Herbigny, who was then in constant communication with numerous witnesses.

It was indeed a case of a frightful genocide and a martyred people:

«A moving example was given by many of the dying. When they sensed that they were about to fall, these Christians prayed one last time before the dear family icons which guarded the household. Then, either alone or held up by their dear ones, at times entire groups of the dying would go to the cemetery, towards their families' sepulchre. Nobody could bury them there. But having breathed their last gasp on consecrated ground, they would not be thrown off it. After an effort which often took them two or three hours, they would cover a few hundred yards. They arrived, they prayed for their deaths and then, lying down on their sepulchres, they would extend their arms in the form of a Cross, and wait. Hundreds, even thousands, died in this position.»⁶¹³

III. STALIN: THE TERROR CONTINUES

The years following the death of Lenin, in 1924, saw the irresistible rise of Stalin, who successfully eliminated all his rivals. In 1929, he finally achieved total control of the Soviet Empire. Deliberately, satanically, he launched the infernal machine once more: purges, persecutions, famines.

THE LIVING HELL OF THE YEARS 1929-1933

«In April of 1929, the sixteenth Party Conference decided on a second general purge (the first had taken place in 1921).» Thousands of functionaries were thus sanctioned, eliminated.

THE PERSECUTIONS. During this time, the impious propaganda designed to kill the faith of the masses intensified. In 1925 “the Union of Militant Godless” was created. Its journal, the *Bezbojnik* (meaning the “Godless”) organized conferences and blasphemous demonstrations. The association distributed films, created museums to spread atheism especially among the youth, and to make the struggle against religion more effective.

A law of April 9, 1929, gave a new pretext for another outbreak of the persecution: «Hundreds of churches were demolished, including historical monuments...» On August 27, the “continuous week” was introduced, which

suppressed the Sunday. During the years that followed, the secret police (the KGB of that time, which had replaced the Cheka) achieved the extermination of the Catholic clergy of Ukraine.

THE DEKULAKIZATION. On November 7, 1929, Stalin published an article with far-reaching implications: «*The Year of the Great Rupture.*» It dealt with passing «through a new revolution» to collective agriculture. But the revolution is first of all terror: «After the policy which consisted in limiting the exploitive tendencies of the Kulaks (sic), we pass on to a new policy of *liquidation of the Kulaks as a class.*» This was the creation of the collective farms and “dekulakization”.

Massacred, deported, starved, once again it was by the millions that the peasants perished in atrocious sufferings:

«The kulaks and kulakizers were deported with their families. By the hundreds of thousands they were led away in unheated box cars thousands of miles away, to the faraway regions of the Urals, Siberia or Kazakhstan. Many died on the way or on arrival, for as a general rule, the deported were left in deserted places: forests, mountains, steppes.

«The ruin of the countryside by the interminable dekulakization and deportation led, in 1932-1933, to a famine which, in its extent and the number of its victims, was even worse than that of 1921-1922. Not only did the State not struggle against it, but it even contributed to amplifying it, utilizing it as a weapon in its “civil war” against the peasants.» For during this time the government continued to export wheat!

The number of victims? That is difficult to know. What is certain is that the secret police informed Stalin of the suppression of three and a half million kulaks. Stalin himself was bold enough to tell Churchill that during the collectivisation, “justice was done” to «ten million kulaks, of whom the great majority were annihilated, and the others sent to Siberia». But the most serious demographers count at least fifteen million victims of this nightmare of the years 1929-1933.⁶¹⁴

As for those whose lives were spared, they were reduced by the thousands to an inhuman slavery: the gulag took on gigantic dimensions; tens of millions of slave labourers became the indefinitely renewable raw material for the extreme

industrialization decreed by the five-year plan of 1928.

Here are the facts, here is the reality perfectly well known to us through innumerable witnesses, from Kravchenko⁶¹⁵ to Solzhenitsyn, among so many others who have all described this atrocious drama of the “Gulag Archipelago”.

IV. THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION: A WORK OF SATAN

BOLSHEVISM UNMASKED

Here, in all clarity, are the lessons to be learned from the undeniable exposition of the facts:

«It is better to recall this history than to give an abstract dissertation on Marxism-Leninism... The dictatorship of Lenin and Stalin, like that of Bela Kun, is founded on absolute hatred of law, on terror, secret denunciation and death camps. For this reason it escapes the yardstick of all traditional ethical standards. But even more, this totalitarian dictatorship of the State or of the Party (it is the same thing) has no constructive project except for the alleged liberation of the proletariat, which is a snare. Its only function is to destroy society in its religious and human foundations, to constrain it continually under terror to make it the simple instrument of its universal hatred and its expansion in the world.

«Once the State is conquered, the Party no longer has any other purpose, neither service nor justice, except its own domination in the annihilation of all rival reality or power, whether spiritual, intellectual or even economic. These are denounced as reactionary. The dictatorship is implacable, as absolute as a religion... And it must be observed, with the most perceptive and courageous historians: it is a Jewish, xenophobic dictatorship, transposing racist biblical messianism into the messianism of the Party, oppressor of the peoples. The Bolshevik dictatorship is in the service of a religious faith which is neither human nor Christian, and therefore can only be satanic.»⁶¹⁶

This is indeed the only possible explanation. History compels us to this conclusion even more than an analysis of the confused and mendacious texts of Marx or Lenin. The Bolshevik revolution can only reach such depths of

inhumanity, always and everywhere, because it is «intrinsically perverse» and fundamentally satanic. It is truly the work of “the Enemy of the human race”, who was “a liar and a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). The tree is known by its fruits: had anyone ever seen such a false utopia and homicidal fury raised to a system and an absolute law? Heller and Nekrich observed this fact, and it is especially valuable for us to see it coming from their pen: «The Great Terror is always preceded and accompanied by the Great Lie.»⁶¹⁷ These words say it all.

We are reminded of the “mystery of iniquity” spoken of by Saint Paul, which hitherto had been operating in secret and is suddenly revealed in broad daylight, concealing a satanic hatred against God, against Christ, against the Church and against Christendom (II Thess. 2:3-12). Thus we have seen, since 1917, a veritable apocalyptic drama, a drama unprecedented in the entire history of humanity. Never had the forces of evil been unleashed with such power, and found nothing capable of opposing them.

For the other side to the drama, and the most stupefying fact of the century, is that the entire West (and to a great extent the Church itself, as we shall see) obstinately refused to admit these two facts staring them in the face: communism today is the instrument of satanic domination, and if it meets with no obstacles it will soon threaten to spread to the entire planet. For even though Bolshevik Russia became a frightful “showcase of hell”, the West’s blindness is so great that Lenin’s forecasts are being fulfilled to the letter: communism seduces all the nations before reducing them implacably to servitude:

«The example of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic will be a living model for the peoples of all nations, and this model’s propaganda power and revolutionary impulse will be prodigious.» «... There is no force in the world which can oppose the Bolsheviks if they do not let themselves be intimidated, if they know how to seize power and retain it until the victory of the world socialist revolution.»⁶¹⁸

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT REVELATION OF TUY: GOD ASKS FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA (THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1929)

Since 1917, the words of the Apostle apply more than ever before: «Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.» (Eph. 6:11-12) In this apocalyptic combat Our Lady of Fatima intervenes, to confront the menacing forces of Impiety. In 1929, God in His mercy wished to let the world know that “enough was enough”. The hour had come to deliver «poor Russia» from the “diabolical possession” which had overcome it, to save it and convert it. Through this conversion, God would have stopped the sinister conflagration which otherwise, little by little, was going to ravage all the nations... Thus the intervention of God with a view to ending such a tragedy takes on enormous importance. In fact the revelation of Tuy crowns the cycle of the apparitions of Fatima by a spectacular theophany, for which no comparable example can be found in the entire history of the Church since the apparition which knocked Saul to the ground on the road to Damascus, to make him the Apostle of the nations.

In the course of our account, we have left our seer as a young postulant in her convent of Pontevedra. After the apparitions of December 10, 1925, and February 15, 1926, concerning the devotion of reparation on the five first Saturdays of the month,⁶¹⁹ Lucy left Pontevedra on July 16, 1926, to enter the novitiate of the Dorothean Sisters established at Tuy, a nearby city in Spanish Galicia at the Spanish-Portuguese border. After her reception of the habit on October 2, 1926, she pronounced her first vows on October 3, 1928.

In 1929, the humble Maria das Dores pursued her hidden life at Tuy – so well hidden that the majority of her fellow sisters were still unaware that she was the seer of Fatima – putting into practice the message of Our Lady and living Her rule to perfection, giving herself entirely to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. A letter she wrote to one of her sisters in religion, one month before the revelation of June 13, bears witness to this peace and this fervour.⁶²⁰

The moment had come. The messenger was ready. It was then that the promise

of the great Secret was fulfilled: «I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia...»⁶²¹

I. THE APPARITION AND MESSAGE OF TUY (THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1929)

Sister Lucy herself left a description of the event, and so we quote her account at length, adding only a few subtitles:⁶²²

«Russia 1929. Our Lord asks for the consecration.

«The Reverend Father Gonçalves sometimes came to our chapel to hear confessions. I made my confession to him, and as I felt at ease with him, I continued to do so during the three years he remained there as superior.»⁶²³

THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA

«At this time Our Lord informed me that the moment had come when He willed for me to make known to the Holy Church His desire for the consecration of Russia and His promise to convert it... The communication took place in this way:

THE HOLY HOUR OF ADORATION AND REPARATION

«(13/6/29). I had requested and obtained permission from my superiors and confessor to make the Holy Hour from 11:00 p.m. until midnight from Thursday to Friday.

«Being alone one night, I knelt down before the communion rail in the middle of the chapel to say the prayers of the Angel, lying prostrate. Feeling tired, I got up and knelt, and continued to say them with my arms in the form of a cross. The only light came from the sanctuary lamp.»

A SPECTACULAR TRINITARIAN THEOPHANY

«Suddenly a supernatural light illumined the whole chapel and on the altar appeared a cross of light which reached to the ceiling.

«In a brighter part could be seen, on the upper part of the Cross, the face of

a man and His body to the waist;

«On His breast was an equally luminous dove,

«and nailed to the cross, the body of another man.

«A little below the waist, suspended in mid-air, was to be seen a Chalice and a large Host on to which fell some drops of Blood from the face of the Crucified and from a wound in His breast. These drops ran down over the Host and fell into the Chalice.

«Under the right arm of the Cross was Our Lady with Her Immaculate Heart in Her hand... (It was Our Lady of Fatima with Her Immaculate Heart... in Her left hand... without a sword or roses, but with a crown of thorns and flames...)

«Under the left arm (of the Cross), some big letters, as it were of crystal-clear water running down over the Altar, formed these words: “Grace and Mercy”.

«I understood that it was the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity that was shown to me, and I received lights about this mystery which I am not permitted to reveal.»

THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA

«Then Our Lady said to me: ***“The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father to make, in union with all the bishops of the world, the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means.”***

«***“So numerous are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against Me, that I come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray.”***

«I gave an account of this to my confessor, who ordered me to write what Our Lord willed to be done.»

LATER ON, OUR LORD COMPLAINS

«Later on, by means of an interior communication, Our Lord said to me, complaining: ***“They did not want to heed My request!... Like the King of France they will repent and do it, but it will be late. Russia will have already spread its errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecutions against the Church: the Holy Father will have much to suffer.”***»

THE MOST PRECISE REQUEST. Let us point out right away that in 1930, in two letters to Father Gonçalves, Sister Lucy was to express in a slightly different manner the requests of Heaven, closely associating the devotion of reparation on the five first Saturdays of the month with the consecration of Russia:

«The good Lord promises to end the persecution in Russia, if the Holy Father will himself make a solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as well as ordering all the bishops of the Catholic world to do the same. The Holy Father must then promise that upon the ending of this persecution he will approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion already described.»⁶²⁴

A PROMISE STILL IN EFFECT

What a wonderful, incomparable promise! It has not been abolished by the interminable delays of our Pastors in responding to the requests of Heaven. For in Her Secret, Our Lady is categorical: «In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph, the Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, she will be converted, and a period of peace will be given to the world.» So this message continues to be just as relevant for our day. We can be sure that the great vision which accompanied it will be known in the entire world. Everywhere this holy Icon will be spread as a remembrance of the great miracle of conversion and peace granted to Russia and the world, through the mediation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We must therefore love this extraordinary vision, meditate on it, and try to better understand all the riches contained in it, for it summarizes the entire message of Fatima.

II. A SPECTACULAR TRINITARIAN THEOPHANY

THE VISION AND THE MESSAGE

At Tuy, just as was the case in Saul's vision on the road to Damascus, and in the apparitions of the Angel and Our Lady of Fatima, the apparition is composed entirely of light: «Suddenly the whole chapel was illumined by a supernatural light.» «God is light», and Sister Lucy undoubtedly would have contented herself with these simple words had not her vision been accompanied by a message to transmit, a message closely related to the divine Mystery it had been given her to contemplate. For as we will see later on, the vision of the mystery was not only juxtaposed with the request of Our Lady and Her promise of the conversion of Russia: the vision explains the meaning of the promise, it manifests its extraordinary importance, and guarantees in advance its extraordinary fulfilment.

AN INDESCRIBABLE VISION?

At the end of her account, Sister Lucy says with deliberate solemnity: «I understood that it was the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity that was shown to me, and I received *lights about this mystery which I am not permitted to reveal.*» Thus Sister Lucy repeats the very words once used by Saint Paul: «I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth), such a one caught up to the Third Heaven. And I know... that he was caught up into paradise, and heard *secret words, which it is not permitted to man to utter.*» (2 Cor. 12:2-4)

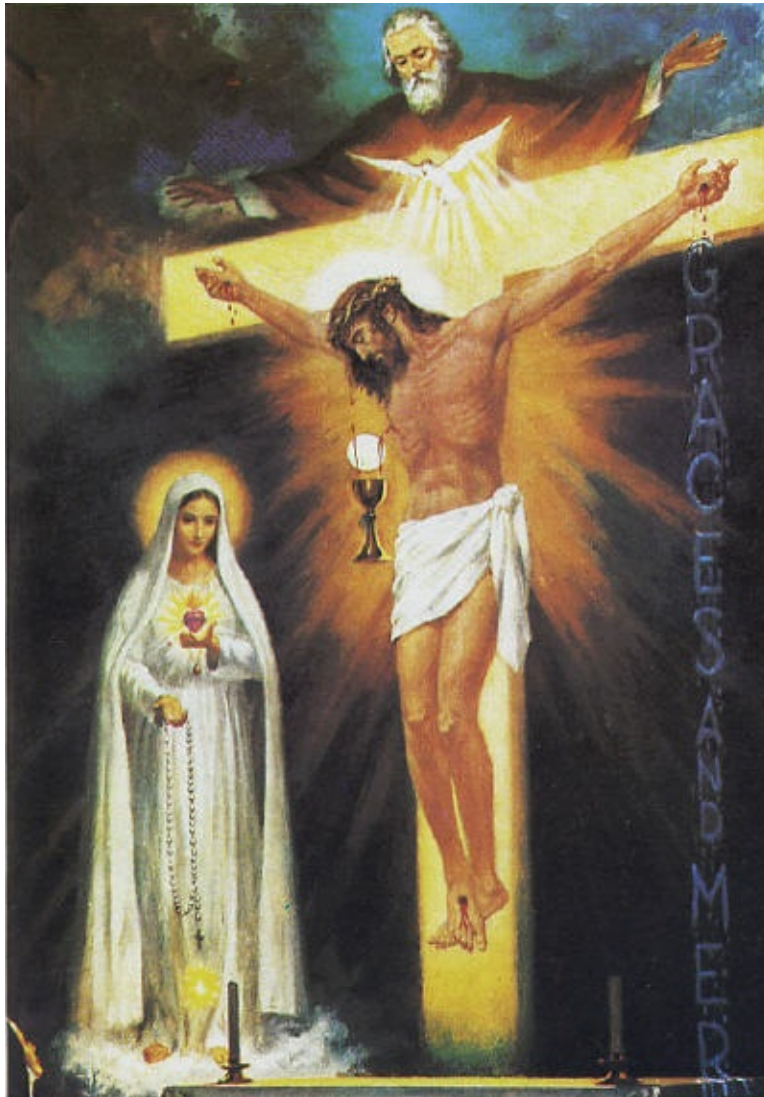
Thus we have been informed: the Trinitarian theophany of June 13, 1929 was an unspeakable mystical grace for Lucy, and a vision so sublime that of course it is inaccessible to us. Yet, the seer wanted to tell us something about it. This description is then for our spiritual profit...

But let us avow right away that on the first reading one is struck by the simple, dry, almost clumsy nature of the account which is disappointing to us. Clearly the seer has made no effort to depict the apparition for us in an attractive manner. This absence of all qualifiers, the lack of any expression of devotional sentiment, can be surprising for some. The three Divine Persons are not even named. Sister Lucy is content to say: «The face of a man..., a dove..., another man». And that is all!

This striking “coldness” is surely intentional. Is it not the best way of making us

see, if not the mystery, at least its ineffable and transcendent character? Would not any description with more detail and colour to it have diminished the mystery, distorted it and reduced it to our human understanding?

This is especially the case because the richness of the Vision consists in an order entirely different from the sensible one, which has been voluntarily reduced to a minimum. The image is there only to evoke, to recall to our memory the divine Words which accompany it, and give us the key to this incomparable Icon: it is all the Words taken together which constitute the whole message of Fatima, the faithful echo of the unique and entire Revelation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, expressed by Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. Thus we are not prevented from taking stock of the savoury riches contained within...



THE HOLY ICON OF THE REDEMPTIVE TRINITY

Many saints received sublime revelations from God on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. To some of them, it was given to contemplate the mystery *ad intra*, as the theologians say, or in other words to grasp in some way the ineffable processions which eternally constitute the Three Persons in their distinction on the bosom of the Father, *Filius semper nascens*,⁶²⁵ and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the One and the Other as from only one Principle, and by one unique Spiration, *tamquam ab uno principio et unica spiratione*.⁶²⁶

The vision of Tuy, on the contrary, is entirely “*economical*”: in other words, it is the Holy Trinity *ad extra*, entirely engaged in the work of our salvation. Although the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (the latter under the figure of a luminous dove equal in brightness to the Father) are represented in their perfect distinction, this vision is not static. Instead, the mystery appears to us in its double movement of “procession”, of “descent”, and then of “conversion”. “going back up”, following the great theological theme of *exitus* and *reditus*.

For the vision is accompanied by a message which reveals to us something of the unspeakable secret: «*Grace and Mercy*» is written under the bar of the Cross in letters of crystal-clear water running down below. And the words of Our Lady during the apparition are all summed up in the three words which remind us of the most important themes of Her message: “consecration, reparation, conversion”.

Do we not have here a wonderful key which will permit us to see something of the inexhaustible richness of the divine Mystery, which is revealed in the double movement of love by which our salvation is worked out?

1. *Exitus*: the mystery of “Grace and Mercy.”

2. *Reditus*: the mystery of the conversion of souls, of Russia and of nations, by the practices of reparation and consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary requested by Our Lady.

Let us point out already the first delicate gesture of Heaven towards «poor Russia» which it wants to save: God has chosen to reveal His great design of mercy by a *trinitarian theophany*. For a true son of holy Russia, this fact could not pass unnoticed: «Russia (writes Volkoff) has *a mystic heart whose true name is the monastery of the Holy Trinity of Saint Sergius*». Founded in 1344 not far from Moscow by a holy anchorite, Sergius of Radonezh, the surroundings of the Holy Trinity monastery developed so much that it became a small city, «a holy city and the heart of the Russian Church, which gave birth to 254 monasteries during the next two centuries».⁶²⁷

III. «GRACE AND MERCY»

«*THE THRONE OF GRACE AND MERCY*» (Heb. 4:16)

“HAIL, O CROSS, OUR ONLY HOPE!” In the vision of Tuy, the cross takes up all the space and is immense: «On the altar appeared a cross of light which reached up to the ceiling».

And on this Cross, although He alone is nailed because only He is the incarnate Divine Person, Jesus crucified is not alone. Above Him on the upper part of the Cross is the Father, who holds Him up. In the bosom of the Father and hovering above the Son is the Dove, representing the Holy Spirit. This holy Cross which the Church boldly makes us “adore” appears here in all its glory, sparkling with light, as if it were a throne for the Holy Trinity. Is it not, indeed, reminiscent of that «*Throne of God and the Lamb*» spoken of in the Apocalypse? Just as in the vision of Saint John, at Tuy the Lamb was «in the midst of the Throne» (Apoc. 7:17).

This is the first marvel, the first eloquent “sermon” of the Holy Cross, which today is despised and scorned by Christians themselves. This Cross, which is the Throne of God, is also the source of our salvation.

“O HOLY TRINITY, THOU FOUNTAIN OF SALVATION.” «Hail, O Cross, our only hope!... O Thou Holy Trinity, fountain of our salvation!» These are the triumphal words of the hymn *Vexilla Regis*, sung during Passiontide.

At Tuy, «under the left arm of the Cross, some large letters as it were of *crystal-clear* water running down over the altar, formed these words: “Grace and Mercy”.» Does not this Water of Life, this Water of Grace which flows from the Throne of the Cross, expressly remind us of the great vision of the Apocalypse? «Then the Angel showed me a river of water of life, *clear as crystal*, proceeding from the Throne of God and the Lamb.» (Apoc. 22:1) And again: «For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life.» (Apoc. 7:17)

This is the first mystery revealed to us by this Water gushing from the Throne of God: the mystery of the gift of Grace and Mercy by the entire Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which decides, effects and completes our salvation through the redeeming Cross of Christ. We are far from the stupid and revolting theology of a Luther, a Calvin or a Jansenius, imagining the Heavenly Father as being angry at His own Son, and transferring to Him the wrath merited by our sins. The vision of Tuy evokes instead the hymn of thanksgiving which the liturgy repeats unceasingly on the Feast of the Holy Trinity: «Benedicta sit Sancta

Trinitas atque indivisa Unitas! Confitebimur ei *quia fecit nobiscum Misericordiam suam!*» In a similar way, the vision of Tuy unites the three mysteries of the Trinity, Redemption and Grace. Yes, blessed be God in His Holy Trinity and indivisible Unity! Let us praise Him because He has made us partake of His merciful Love!

AT THE SOURCES OF MERCY: «THE LOVE OF GOD THE FATHER» (2 Cor. 13:13)

At the summit of the Cross, as the initial Fountain of all being, all life, and all charity, above the crucified Son who proceeds from Him, is the Most Holy Father, under the appearance of «the face of a man». For in what other way could He appear? Is it not this appearance of a man which best reveals to us His Fatherhood? «He who sees Me sees the Father» (Jn. 14:9), Jesus tells us, and He is «the Image of the invisible God» (Col. 1:15), «the splendour of His glory and the figure of His substance». (Heb. 1:3)

In the vision of Tuy, the Father appears as the initial fountain of «Grace and Mercy». He is the Father of the prodigal child, «the Father of mercies» (2 Cor. 1:3), always ready to show kindness. Grace and Mercy, these are the dispositions of the Father towards Russia, the Russia of the victims as well as that of the persecutors. Sister Lucy is to transmit this message to her confessor: God is «disposed to have mercy on poor Russia», «He greatly desires to save it.»⁶²⁸

Yes, did not God permit this unchaining of evil to make of this nation, as He did with Saul the persecutor «who ravaged the Church», «a vessel of mercy»? (Acts 8:3) In any case, it is remarkable that when Saint Paul recalls the event of his conversion and the apparition on the road to Damascus, it is precisely these two words, grace and mercy, that are found together under his pen: «I give thanks to Him who hath strengthened me, to Jesus Christ our Lord, for that He hath counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry; Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and contumelious. But I obtained *the mercy* of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. Now *the grace* of Our Lord hath abounded exceedingly with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.

«But for this cause have I obtained *mercy*: that in me first Christ Jesus might

show forth all patience, for the information of them that shall believe in Him unto life everlasting.» (1 Tim 1:12-16).

Since at Tuy God promised in an extraordinary theophany to «convert» Russia, to «save» it, this is «a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance», for His mercy is all powerful.

«THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST»

This grace of salvation granted by the Father is completely gratuitous. His beloved Son – to manifest it to us in truth, in such a way as to make us see the gravity of sin and the immensity of pardon, and thus be able to touch our hearts – the same beloved Son wished to merit it, paying on the Cross the whole price in His sorrow and His blood.

In the vision of Tuy we find once again the image of the “God of pity” so dear to our painters and sculptors of the Middle Ages, so rich in a vigorous theology deep in meaning. It is the image of this «most gentle and most merciful Heavenly Father, holding in His holy and venerable hands the pitiful, suffering body of His Son, crucified for us for the remission of our sins.»⁶²⁹

THE BROKEN BODY OF THE SAVIOUR, HIS BLOOD POURED OUT. «For I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.» (1 Cor. 2:2) In the face of the too facile *theologia gloriae* (theology of glory) preached by our modern theologians who “empty the Cross of Christ”, it is this *theologia crucis* (theology of the Cross) preached by Saint Paul which the vision of Tuy imposes on us. In this trinitarian theophany the only Son, the Word of God, King of kings and Lord of lords is Jesus, and Jesus nailed to the Cross, where His Heart is pierced and His Face is bloody from the wounds of His crown of thorns.

The mystery which He gives us to contemplate is His Blood poured out for our redemption, and which He offers to us as our Eucharistic drink:

«Suspended in mid-air was to be seen a Chalice and a large Host onto which fell some drops of Blood from the face of the Crucified and from a wound in His breast. These drops ran down over the Host and fell into the Chalice.»

Already at the Cabeço in the autumn of 1916, the children had seen the same vision: «He was holding a Chalice in His left hand, with the Host suspended above it, from which some drops of Blood fell into the Chalice.»⁶³⁰ At Tuy, the Blood of Jesus with its proper appearances no longer flows only from His Eucharistic Body, the holy Host, it gushes forth from the wound in His Heart and the wounds in His outraged Countenance.

This striking realism of the Blood poured out and flowing from the Chalice is really the response to the modern, Protestant heresy which pretends to dissociate the Eucharist from the Sacrifice of the Cross, to connect it only with the supper of Holy Thursday or only with the glorious life of the risen Christ, sitting in Heaven at the right Hand of the Father. The vision of Tuy, on the other hand, introduces us to the heart of the mystery: the blood of the Chalice is the Blood of His Body. It is the same redeeming Blood at the Mass as at the Sacrifice of the Cross: in the latter It was shed in pain, while today, in the Mass, It is offered to us as a salutary drink. It is the same broken Body which is proposed to us for our food, for the holy Host is like a prolongation, a «true, real and substantial» extension of the Victim of Calvary.

THE ICON OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. Let us remark finally, for this fact surely is profoundly significant, that this spectacular Trinitarian theophany took place in the Sanctuary, above the Altar and the Tabernacle where the Real Presence was. If the whole vision is Trinitarian, it is also entirely eucharistic. It represents before our eyes the reality of the mystery which takes place at each one of our Masses, where for our sake, each day, the redemptive Incarnation is renewed.

In this mystery of the Mass, the entire Holy Trinity manifests to us the secret of Its Mercy, which dispenses to us the riches of Its Grace, in the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Saviour. «Caritas Pater est, Gratia Filius, Communicatio Spiritus Sanctus, o beata Trinitas», we chant in one antiphon of the liturgy, echoing the beautiful formula of Saint Paul.⁶³¹

«*THE SPIRIT OF GRACE*» (Heb. 10:29)

In the vision of Tuy, as in the iconography of the Middle Ages, one can see «*on the Father's breast an equally luminous dove*». This representation of the Holy Spirit might surprise us. The symbolism seems very poor and means very little to

our mentality. Besides, it risks causing a problem to the theologian: is not the order of the trinitarian processions reversed? The dove representing the Holy Spirit, which rests in the bosom of the Father, does not seem to proceed from the Son. Does not this image correspond more to Eastern Orthodox theology, which maintains that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, rather than Catholic dogma which clearly states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son?

However, even before we look for possible speculative answers to the question – and whether the vision of Tuy might suggest a reconciliation between the two traditions in the truths they contain – we can quickly be reassured. The apparition of Tuy surely does not refer us back to medieval iconography but quite simply... to the great trinitarian theophanies of the Gospel! And as we shall see, the theophanies described in the Gospel, with astonishing precision, throw a great light on the essential message of Tuy: the request for the consecration of Russia and the promise of its conversion. No, this dove representing the Holy Spirit is not to be neglected as some sort of accessory element, placed there only to complete the trinitarian symbolism artificially. As we will see, it too is rich in meaning.

First of all, it unquestionably brings to mind the Trinitarian theophany of Our Saviour's baptism. «And when Jesus had been baptized, He immediately came up from the water. And behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending *as a dove*, and coming upon Him. And behold, a voice from the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."» (Mt. 3:16) Later John the Baptist gave witness: «I beheld the Spirit descending *as a dove* from Heaven, and He remained upon Him... And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Chosen One of God.» (Jn. 1:32) Saint Peter also said: «You know how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power.» (Acts 10:38)

But in the vision of Tuy, the dove representing the Holy Spirit descends and remains upon Jesus *crucified*. Yet this is not a new representation; it only manifests and makes more explicit the lesson of the Gospel.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT, SALVATION OF THE NATIONS. Exegetes have shown how the baptism of Our Lord already prefigures His sorrowful Passion. The symbolism is created by the descent into the waters of the Jordan, but especially by the voice from Heaven explicitly designating Jesus as the

Messiah-Saviour, the “Suffering Servant” of the book of Isaiah. The same words, which were heard again during the Transfiguration, «This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him», likewise place this second trinitarian theophany in close relationship with the Passion of Jesus. Moreover, Saint Luke adds the detail that Moses and Elijah, who were talking with Jesus, «spoke of His death which He was about to undergo at Jerusalem». (Lk. 9:31; Mt. 17:5) Thus, at His baptism as well as His transfiguration, Jesus appears as the one designated by His Father as the beloved Son, the suffering Messiah of Isaiah on whom His Spirit rests.

Thus, the vision of Tuy goes even beyond the theophanies of the Gospel, and refers us back to the prophecies of Isaiah on *the suffering Servant on whom the Holy Spirit rests*. This is even clearer if we consider that after the evocation of the sufferings of the Messiah, the prophecy sings of all His fruits of grace: the conversion and salvation of the nations: «If He offers His life as a victim for sin, He will see a long-lived seed... He will prolong His days and Yahweh’s good pleasure will be accomplished in Him. Through His sufferings, My Servant will justify the many.» (Isaiah 53:10)

And here are those words which we do well to reread, having before our eyes the image of the vision of Tuy and its message for the conversion of Russia. Here are the prophetic words, such as Saint Matthew applies them to Jesus: «Behold My servant, whom I have chosen, My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: *I will put My spirit upon Him*, and He will declare judgment to the gentiles... *A bruised reed* He will not break, and *a smoking wick* He will not quench, Till He send forth judgment unto *victory*, and in His Name will the gentiles hope.» (Mt. 12:18-21)

«The bruised reed and the smoking wick» once referred to the empire of Egypt, which threatened Israel. Do not these words remind us today of this poor nation, Russia, a schismatic nation which persecutes the Church, but is still Christian? For God does not want to abandon it to perdition, but to make it, on the contrary, “a vessel of mercy” by raising it up again and enkindling its flame once more in the household of Roman unity, for the universal triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

And what can we say about this other prophecy of Isaiah which evokes the suffering Messiah who has become King of the nations, but a gentle king, humble of heart, who shows favour to the poor and mercy to the guilty? These

words which Jesus applied to Himself in the synagogue of Nazareth we can still apply to Him, and as we see Him nailed to the Cross as in the theophany of Tui, we can still hear Him pronounce them today: «*The spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He has anointed Me; To bring good news to the poor He has sent Me, to proclaim to the captives release, and sight to the blind; To set at liberty the oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompense... Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*» (Lk. 4:18-21; Is. 61:1-2)

Yes, by the mercy of the Father, may the Grace of Jesus Christ, Redeemer and King, descend soon upon this poor Russia and upon its “Gulag Archipelago”; may this grace convert *its blind* persecutors; may it free *its captives* and all *its oppressed*; may it bring back to the guidance of the one Shepherd the millions of *the poor*, still led astray in schism!

THE CAPITAL GRACE OF THE SON OF GOD, THE SAVIOUR. The dove representing the Holy Spirit, resting above Jesus nailed to the Cross, undoubtedly has another significance. Does it not evoke the whole mystery of the grace of Christ our Head? «Grace and Mercy»: the Father fills His crucified Son with the plenitude of Grace, the plenitude of the Holy Spirit. This infinite treasure He receives through His divine sonship, but He also merits it through His redeeming sacrifice. He will pour out this stream of graces upon all nations through the effusion of the Holy Spirit. It is an adorable Mystery: this divine Plenitude which overflows from the fruitful Trinity, and is communicated in wave after wave... even to the souls of pagans, or rebels and persecutors, to transform and convert them, to lead them through the Church and the mediation of the Immaculate Virgin to the Sacred Heart of the Son, in the bosom of the Father.

Let us cite only a few texts, mentioning this plenitude or fullness, which will cause a good many others to come to mind. First of all Saint John in the prologue to his Gospel: «And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... Yes, *of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.*» (Jn. 1:14 & 16) «For He whom God has sent speaks the word of God, for God gives His spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.» (Jn. 3:34-35) And Saint Paul says: «For if by the offence of the one the many died, much more has the grace of God, and *the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ*, abounded unto the many. But where sin has abounded,

grace has abounded yet more.» (Rom. 5:15 & 20) «Again, He is the Head of His Body, the Church... For it has pleased God the Father that *all His fullness* should dwell in Him, and that through Him He should reconcile to Himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the Blood of His Cross.» (Col. 1:18-20) «For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily... and in Him you have received of that fullness.» (Col. 2:9)

THE MYSTERY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

«On the right side of the Cross stood Our Lady, with Her Immaculate Heart in Her hand...»

«There stood near the Cross of Jesus, His Mother», St. John tells us. (Jn 19:25) That is where She appears in the theophany of Tui, «under the right arm of the Cross». For the Blessed Virgin Mary is the first to receive in Herself this plenitude of grace which flows from the Cross, gushing from the pierced Heart of Her well-beloved Son. She received of this plenitude more than any other creature. There, under the Cross of Jesus where She is standing, the richness of Her ineffable mystery shines forth the best. It is the mystery of an *incomparable Heart*, for it belongs to *the Immaculate Conception, the pierced Heart* of Our Lady of Sorrows, Spouse of the divine Crucified One, Co-Redemptrix and «Reparatrix of fallen humanity»,⁶³² *the Heart of the Mother of God and Mother of men*, Mediatrix of Grace and universal Dispensatrix of Mercy for all humanity, redeemed on Calvary. Yes, the liturgy is a thousand times right to sing in honour of Mary, the pressing invitation of the Apostle to approach without fear the throne of the Cross: «Adeamus cum fiducia ad *thronum Gratiae*, ut *Misericordiam* consequamur et *Gratiam* inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.»⁶³³ Yes, «let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy and find Grace to help in the time of need.» (Heb. 4:16)

THE MYSTERY OF AN INCOMPARABLE HEART. Fatima is the revelation of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Always, everywhere, there is question only of this most holy Heart. Why this insistence, if not to induce us to contemplate Our Lady in each one of Her mysteries, under this symbol of the heart? For it is so expressive not only of sentiments, but of the person Herself, in the entire spiritual portion. The Blessed Virgin Mary is a creature so pure, so sublime that, although She really does share in our nature, it is Her “*Heart*” that sums up and most exactly expresses Her entire being. This means that She is

first and foremost *a soul* completely filled with the Holy Spirit, a brightly shining *intelligence* full of unsearchable Wisdom, a sovereign, indefatigable *will*, unceasingly working so that Love inflame the whole world. Behold this «*Admirable Heart*», to repeat the expression of St. John Eudes, ready to receive the plenitude of Grace with which God wishes to fill it.

THE MYSTERY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART. At Tuy, the Blessed Virgin appears alone at the foot of the Cross. Neither the holy women nor St. John appear there. This shows that Our Lady has a unique, incomparable place in the plan of salvation. She is the Elect, the woman chosen among all others, the beloved and unique Daughter of the Heavenly Father, predestined from all eternity to become the ever-Virgin Mother, the all-holy Spouse and Companion of the Son of God made man, *the new Eve of this heavenly Adam*: «I came from the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures; like a vapour I covered the earth, I inhabited the heavens, and My throne was a column of clouds.» (Sirach 24:3)

The scene of Calvary reveals to us the mystery of the Immaculate One in its very source. Under the right arm of the Cross, bedewed with the divine Blood, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the first and incomparable fruit of the redeeming sacrifice, to which She owes the singular privilege of Her Immaculate Conception. Redeemed in advance by Her Son in a very special way, «*sublimiori modo redempta*»,⁶³⁴ She has been preserved from the sinful solidarity and stain of the children of Adam. Like the Church, which She typifies, one can truthfully say that mystically She was born from the side of Christ pierced by the lance during His sleep of death, just as the first Eve was drawn by the Heavenly Father from Adam's rib, as he slept in the garden of Eden.

This is the first ineffable mystery, which filled Saint Maximilian Kolbe with wonder. Predestined from before all ages, She is the “Immaculate Conception” of the Father and the Son. From the first instant of Her creation, They filled Her with the fullness of Their Spirit of Love, of which She is the created Image, the Temple and living Sanctuary. *Ave Maria, gratia plena!*

Flowing down from under the left arm of the Cross is the crystal-clear water forming the letters of the words, «Grace and Mercy». Does this not equally express, after the mystery of the grace of Headship in Christ – His pierced Heart is the fountain of living waters (Jn. 7:37-39) – the mystery of Mary, universal Mediatrix of Grace? Is not the Immaculate One, “full of grace”, to an eminent

degree this fountain of “crystal-clear water” gushing from the “throne of God and the Lamb”, this time from the right side, according to the letter of Ezechiel’s prophecy: «*Vidi aquam egredientem a latere dextro*»? (Ez. 47:1-12; Jn. 19:34; Apoc. 22:1)⁶³⁵

In the vision of Tuy, according to Sister Lucy, Our Lady appeared as She did at Fatima. Is it not remarkable that to describe the Immaculate One as She appeared at the Cova da Iria, Lucy used this comparison of crystal-clear water – this water which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit everywhere in Scripture – illumined by the rays of the sun: «There before us on a small holm-oak, we beheld a Lady all dressed in white. She was more brilliant than the sun, and radiated a light more clear and intense than *a crystal glass filled with sparkling water, when the rays of the burning sun shine through it.*»⁶³⁶

The Immaculate One is a pure water which has gushed forth from a single Principle, the unique divine Fountain of the Father and the Son. At the foot of the Throne of the Cross, She receives their superabundant plenitude of Grace and Mercy.

THE MYSTERY OF THE PIERCED HEART. «*It was Our Lady of Fatima with Her Immaculate Heart... without a sword or roses, but with a crown of thorns and flames.*»

We come to the second mystery. At the foot of the Cross, Her Immaculate Heart is pierced by the same sorrows as those that overwhelm Her beloved Son. All the torments of His Passion pierce Her Heart: the agony, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, outrages, crucifixion. She also is bent down under the weight of the sins of the world. Her Heart is mortally wounded by so many crimes, outrages, blasphemies, so much ingratitude and indifference, which pierce Her like sharp thorns.

She is like the Spouse in the Canticle, whom the Bridegroom implores to share in his redemptive Passion: “I hear my beloved knocking: open to me, my sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one! My head is covered with dew, and my cheeks with the drops of the night!” (Ct. 5:2; 6:9; 2:14)

This mystery of *co-redemptive compassion* is eloquently expressed at Tuy: nothing is said to us about the Heart of Jesus. Only the Heart of Mary is represented. But the seer insists that the Immaculate Heart did not appear

according to the usual iconography, pierced with a sword and with roses, but with a crown of thorns and with flames. In other words, it appeared exactly as the Heart of Jesus appeared to Saint Margaret Mary. It suggests to us with Saint John Eudes that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are but one Heart, as is fitting for a Bridegroom and a Spouse, suffering together the same sorrowful Passion for our salvation:

«From that moment, and right up until the end, Your common love of the Heavenly Father unites You even more closely, and Your unique love for us sinners, flowing from Your Sacred Heart, O Jesus, into Your Immaculate Heart, O Mary, procures for You a fruitfulness which makes You blessed.»⁶³⁷

THE MYSTERY OF A MOTHER'S HEART. «With Her Immaculate Heart... in Her left hand.» Our Lady offers to us this Heart. She gives it to us because She is our Mother, our true Mother in Heaven. Her Heart is all on fire with the Spirit of Love kindled with an infinite tenderness for Her children, whom She brought forth in sorrow on Calvary, and an effective love which wishes at any price to save them from the eternal fire of hell.

The Heart of Mary, the Immaculate Heart, the Heart pierced with thorns, also reveals itself at Tui in this great scene from Calvary as the *maternal Heart* of the new Eve. Mary is the Mother of the new human race, conquered and redeemed by the Blood of Her Son, and Her co-redemptive Compassion. It is Jesus Himself who expresses this universal maternity applied to each of His disciples, to each of the members of His Body, as in a solemn testament, speaking to His Mother and His beloved disciple: «Woman, behold thy Son. Son, behold thy Mother.» The best exegetes are in agreement with the Fathers as well as the Magisterium of the Church, in giving these words *all the force of a spiritual, supernatural maternity*, as really concrete as the natural motherhood which is its foretype, and all the breadth of *a universal maternity*, as vast by right as the whole human race, and extending in fact to the multitudes of Christ's faithful, who in the end are joined to His Body and led by Him to the glory of Heaven.

Yes, by Her plenitude of grace, by Her fiat at the moment of the annunciation, when She became the Mother of the "whole Christ", and by Her co-redemptive compassion as Spouse, Our Lady merited to become the new Eve, the Mother of all men. She really brings forth to the divine life all those who correspond to this grace of salvation.⁶³⁸

We find this concept of the spiritual maternity of Mary forcefully expressed in the message of Fatima. For example, in the important revelation received by Sister Lucy on May 29, 1930,⁶³⁹ where Our Lord enumerates the blasphemies which most gravely offend the Immaculate Heart of His Mother: «*Blasphemies against Her divine Maternity, refusing at the same time to recognize Her as Mother of men.*» The formula is rich in meaning and very enlightening. The Immaculate One, the Mother of God because She is the Mother of Christ, is also “Mother of men” with respect to «the rest of Her children», as the Apocalypse says, because it is She who brings them forth, in sorrow, to the divine life. (Apoc. 12:7)

It must also be stressed that in the apparition of December 10, 1925, at Pontevedra, the Child Jesus speaking of the Blessed Virgin to Lucy does not say, “My Mother”, but «*your most holy Mother*»: «Have compassion on the Heart of *your* most holy Mother, covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce Her at every moment.»

The writings of Sister Lucy demonstrate how thoroughly saturated she is with this consoling and beautiful thought. Such expressions as these are constantly found under her pen: «Our tender Mother in Heaven, the Immaculate Heart of Mary», «our most tender Mother», «the Immaculate Heart of our most holy Mother». ⁶⁴⁰ These expressions mean that Mary is «our heavenly Mother», to whom we owe our whole life in the supernatural order, because it is through Her and never without Her that «Our Father in Heaven», Who is the source of supernatural life, and Jesus, Who merited it for us, will to dispense it to us.

Let us understand well: it is not merely an affection, a moral bond which would cause the Blessed Virgin to love us *as* a mother and to adopt us *as* Her children. No! It is something different, an ontological bond, *a relation of origin* which unites us to Her.

In meriting to become the Mother of God, the Immaculate Virgin also merited to become our Mother. Here are the very words of Saint Pius X, whose doctrine once again coincides with the message of Fatima:

«Is not Mary the Mother of God? Thus She is also our Mother... in the chaste womb of the Virgin where Jesus took on mortal flesh, He also assumed a spiritual body formed of all those who were to believe in Him. *Thus as She carried Jesus in Her womb, it must be said that Mary also*

carried all those whose lives were included in the life of the Saviour.

«Thus all of us who being united to Christ are, as the Apostle says, “the members of His body issued from His flesh and His bones”, *have come forth from the womb of the Mother like a body attached to its head...*

«If then the Blessed Virgin is at the same time Mother of God and Mother of men (*Dei simul atque hominum parens est*), who can doubt that She employs all Her power interceding with Her Son, Head of the Body of the Church, that He pour out over us who are His members the gifts of His grace, especially the grace of knowing and living by Him.»⁶⁴¹

THE MATERNAL MEDIATION OF MARY: «MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE, MOTHER OF MERCY»

To avoid anticipating the solemn declarations of the Magisterium, at Fatima the Blessed Virgin Mary never calls Herself “Mediatrice of all graces”, but Her entire message presupposes that She is. Indeed, does not Her supernatural motherhood imply it in an eminent way? What kind of mediation could be more total than the mediation of the Mother who gives life? Being our Mother, how could She not grant us also all the goods at Her disposal? In the liturgy and extra-liturgical hymns we never tire of chanting with fervour: «*Salve, Mater Misericordiae! Mater Dei et Mater veniae, Mater spei et Mater Gratiae, Mater plena sanctae laetitiae, O Maria! Hail, Mother of Mercy! Mother of God and Mother of pardon! Mother of hope and Mother of Grace, Mother full of holy joy, O Mary!*»

Because our birth to the divine life is never completed here below, this bond of motherhood, which is prolonged by the daily gift of innumerable graces, will last right up until the blessed day of our death, our *dies natalis*. Yes, Her “great promise” is our pledge that She is our Mother of Grace and Mercy, who will finally dispense us the grace of graces, the supreme grace of final perseverance which opens the gates of Heaven: «To those who will embrace this devotion to My Immaculate Heart I promise salvation.» (June 13, 1917)

Just as in eternity our divine life will always be a perpetual Gift, flowing from the glorious Life and mercifully associating us to the Eternal Divine Processions, this bond of origin uniting us to our Mother will last eternally.

Let us then love this Immaculate Mother to whom we owe everything. Yes, absolutely everything, because it has pleased the Holy Trinity to associate Her with His plenitude, and through Her to grant us the Gift of Grace, actual graces and sanctifying grace, created graces and Uncreated Grace, the Gift of the sanctifying Spirit, from this Spirit of Love and Wisdom of whom Mary is the living Image and Throne, the Immaculate Vessel, holy Ark, and resplendent Abode: Seat of Wisdom! Spiritual vessel! House of gold! Ark of the covenant! Pray, pray for us!

IV. CONVERSION, REPARATION AND CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Our Blessed Lady is like the ladder of Jacob by which God comes down to us. He wills that we use the same ladder to go back up to Him.

Filled with admiration, in the vision of Tuy we have just contemplated the series of all the mediations going back and forth, disposed with love by our Heavenly Father to make us partakers of His Grace and Mercy, freely giving us the gift of His divine Spirit. First there is the mediation of Christ our only Saviour, crucified for our salvation. There is the Eucharistic mediation of His Body broken and His Blood poured out, offered as a sacrifice of expiation and proposed to us as our saving food and drink in communion. There is the mediation of this crystal-clear water of the Holy Spirit, which has been communicated to us. By baptism and penance it gives us life, sanctifies us, and washes us from all stain of sin. And thus there is the mediation of the Church, the unique and fruitful Spouse, making us partakers of all these gifts by the ministry of its priests who act in the name of Christ and exercise His powers. Finally, a new marvel: to this double mediation of the Son of God, the Saviour, and His Holy Spirit acting through the Church, is mysteriously added the universal mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Grace and Mercy.

THE WAY OF CONVERSION: THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Thus the path of our return to God, *the way of our conversion*, is all marked out. It is the shortest way, the easiest way, the sweetest way, but also *the narrow and enclosed way* and the only way which leads to life. To despise it or depart from it is to despise the Mercy of God, to insult the divine predilections of His Heart. If

it is folly or a diabolical lie to pretend to return to the Father while ignoring His beloved and only Son, sovereign Mediator between God and men,⁶⁴² it is a similar blasphemy, and a sure sign of the work of the evil spirit, to wish to go to Jesus while neglecting the Immaculate Heart of His Mother, whom He has established as our universal Mediatrix. «My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way which will lead you to God», Our Lady declared to Lucy on June 13, 1917.

Thus the wonderful dispensation of the mystery of grace whose aesthetic and mystical aspects we have considered now present themselves to our eyes as a dramatic requirement. In the plan of God, the cult and love of the Blessed Virgin are not something secondary and optional. On the contrary, the whole message of Fatima proclaims that they are the indispensable condition for obtaining salvation. At Tuy, the Blessed Virgin solemnly informed Her messenger of this fact: many souls are damned because they refuse to conform with docility to the predilections of God towards Her, because they despise and insult Her: «So many are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against Me...»

We can easily understand this terrible rigour: Since She is truly our Mother, the Mother of all men, our Co-Redemptrix, Advocate and most loving Mediatrix, how could this Virgin who is all good, and also the Mother of God, the Immaculate One in whom the Trinity takes Its delight, not have an absolute right to the veneration, gratitude and filial love of all Her children? God would no longer be God if He did not severely chastise those who spit in the face of such a Mother and do not repent... The crime is greater still because God wills that She be better known, better loved and more exalted in our times.

Indeed «the moment has come», and for two centuries Heaven's requests have become more and more pressing. The hour has come for the hierarchical Church, which has received as a deposit the treasure of divine Revelation, to now cause the full glory of the Immaculate Heart to shine, and to present Her to the world, authoritatively and in the name of Christ, as the Mediatrix of Grace and Mercy for all souls and for all nations, for the Church and for Christendom. The apparitions of Fatima, with their culmination at Pontevedra and Tuy, correspond to the apparitions of Paray-le-Monial. After the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary comes in the name of God to make known the devotion due to It in preparation for Its "triumph", which in turn heralds the Reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY AND THE CHURCH, THE FINAL SALVATION OF THE WORLD. «God wishes to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.» To this end He wishes to give us a striking proof that through Her, and only through Her, can we be saved from the frightful perils that menace us. Faced with an eternal hell, faced with the hell on earth of the Bolshevik Gulag, God presents the Immaculate Heart of Mary to us as *the final recourse, the last hope of salvation for a world on the way to perdition.*

This is the oracle which Our Lady repeats insistently: “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go.” And on June 13, 1929, the events speak for themselves. “You have seen the famines, the wars and the persecutions which overwhelm the poor people abandoned to the living hell of the communist Gulag, the veritable empire of satan.” Well, Our Lady repeats insistently, to save them “God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.”

GOD PROMISES A MIRACLE THROUGH THE MEDIATION OF MARY... It is in the tragic context of 1929, when Stalin was bringing the bloody terror and the horrors of the Gulag to their height, that the great divine promise must be understood: «It was at this time (Lucy writes) that Our Lord informed me that the moment had come for me to let the Holy Church know His desire for the consecration of Russia and His promise to convert it.» In another place Sister Lucy calls it His promise «to end the persecution in Russia», «His promise to save it». Finally the atrocious butchery, the cynically planned famines, the persecutions, the harassment by the police, the stupid and inhumane socialization, all that was to be ended by the all-powerful intervention of the Mother of God, this *Theotokos* so beloved to the Russian people who continued to venerate Her icons in secret.

The conversion of Russia through the mediation of Mary was to be a first prodigy. But there was also a second...

... AND THROUGH THE MEDIATION OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY. This extraordinary miracle would have stupefied the world, reawakened faith and caused a hymn of thanksgiving to break out among the people. It was imperative that the whole world, heretics, schismatics, Jews and pagans, realize that God had performed the miracle through the mediation of the Queen of Heaven, but also in response to «a solemn and public act» of the Pastors of His one, true Church, which is Catholic and Roman. What admirable wisdom in this twofold mediation! For both are required by God for the long-awaited miracle,

so necessary to world peace, to finally take place: «The good Lord promises to end the persecution in Russia, if the Holy Father will himself make a solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as well as ordering all the bishops of the Catholic world to do the same...»

Poor Russia, dominated by Bolshevism, and still a victim of its centuries-old schism, would have been saved from both evils at the same time. Moreover, deliverance would have come at the request and on the decision of all the Catholic bishops obeying their head, this Pope of Rome, whose universal primacy of jurisdiction as successor of Peter the Russian Church, in its obstinate rebellion, had refused to recognize. Yes, let us admire the astonishing, divine stratagem through which God willed to bring back to His flock, by the millions, the multitude of His sheep led astray in the schism, and at the same time assure world peace.

What fullness of wisdom in this great design of mercy! This already would suffice to show that it is not of man, but of God. The more we examine it, the more we understand its divine coherence. We understand also that this design is irrevocable, and that God does not will to change any part of it. When Sister Lucy asked Him why He would not convert Russia without the Pope making this consecration, Our Lord responded: «Because I want My whole Church to recognize that consecration as *a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to extend its cult later on and place devotion to this Immaculate Heart beside the devotion to My Divine Heart...* The Immaculate Heart of Mary will save Russia. It has been confided to Her.»⁶⁴³

THE ULTIMATE DESIGN OF GOD: THE CONSECRATION AND THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

What will be this triumph, which has been foretold? The universal expansion of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As for this devotion, it is summarized completely in two words: *consecration and reparation*.

THE CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY. Clearly, by establishing such a close connection between the conversion of Russia and its consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, God wants to show us how supremely pleasing this consecration is to Him, not only for Russia, but for all nations. What Lucy says about the “Portuguese miracle” applies, a fortiori, to the

conversion of Russia. She wrote to Pope Pius XII: «This will be the proof of the graces God would have granted to other nations, if like Portugal they had been consecrated to Her.»⁶⁴⁴

If this is the case, it is clear that all other societies, and persons themselves, will receive great graces by consecrating themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But why? The Blessed Virgin did not ask the Russian people or the Portuguese people to consecrate themselves, but for the Pope and the bishops to do it in their name. This is because it is the best way of accepting fully, with love and humility, all the mediations willed by God and which are the true antidote to modern pride, where each individual raises himself into an autonomous and sovereign monad. Yes, against this sin, which is the very essence of the democratic revolution, this is what is most pleasing to God. All those who exercise any authority, the Pope at the head of the Church, the bishop in his diocese, the King as the head and father of his nation, the pastor in his parish, the father in his family – to show that they hold this authority from God and intend to use it in His name and in conformity with His will – must publicly make this act of obedience to the divine Good Pleasure of the Heavenly Father and His Son. However small or large their flock be, they must consecrate it to the Immaculate Heart of Mary which is inseparable from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as to their King and their Queen, to whom they belong and who enjoy the full right of true sovereignty. They can be sure that in exchange for this filial recognition of their power, the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary will mercifully bless, protect and fill with graces all those who shall be confided to Them.⁶⁴⁵

THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY. If the consecration is related to the mystery of the divine mediations, reparation puts into effect this other mystery which is equally at the centre of the message of Fatima: the communion of saints.

During the messages of the Angel in 1916, and again during the apparitions of Our Lady on June 13 and July 13, and shortly after that in the apparitions of Pontevedra, *Heaven urgently asks for reparation* for all «the sins by which God is offended», «for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference» which wound the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, and finally, for «the blasphemies and ingratitude» of men who pierce the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁶⁴⁶

It is remarkable that at Tuy, Our Lady insists on this point again, in two ways. First of all by this grave and terrible warning, which seems to us like an echo of

the first part of the Secret with its terrifying vision of hell: «***So numerous are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against Me that I come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray.***»⁶⁴⁷

Prayer and sacrifice offered in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary to snatch souls from hell – this is a theme which we find constantly in the letters of Sister Lucy of this epoch. Let us remark also that the spectacular trinitarian theophany took place while she was devoting herself, with generosity, to this work of reparation. Fulfilling to the letter the requests of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary, each week during the night of Thursday to Friday, between eleven and twelve in the evening, she would make *a holy hour of adoration and reparation*. Prostrate in the chapel there, or on her knees with her arms in the form of a cross, she would repeat untiringly the two beautiful *prayers of reparation* taught by the Angel at the Cabeço.

This demonstrates how exact is the continuity between the message of Fatima and that of Paray-le-Monial. Fatima is the continuation, the complement, the fulfilment of Paray-le-Monial, for in the great design of divine Mercy the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary are indissolubly linked.⁶⁴⁸ So they must be, as well, in our own love and in the acts of reparation that we offer them.

Yet, in the messages of Pontevedra and Tuy, by an admirable mystery of love and a unique predilection for His Mother, it seems as though the Sacred Heart of Jesus itself willed to be effaced, or at least to be approached only through the sweet mediation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is as if Jesus said to us: “The acts of reparation to be made for all the offences and crimes which insult the sanctity of My Father, the perfect worship which must be rendered unto Him, I Myself as eternal High Priest accomplish in My Sacrifice of the Cross, which is renewed at every moment. The offences, the outrages which wound My Heart, which mock Me in the Sacrament of My Love – to make reparation for them it suffices for you to offer Me the superabundant merits of the Heart of My most holy Mother, and join Her in Her sorrowful compassion. But the injuries, the blasphemies which sadden Her Maternal Heart so cruelly – it is for you, Her children to make reparation for them by consoling Her, and by your prayers and sacrifices obtaining the conversion of the poor people who have had the misfortune of offending Her gravely. For they have merited by this unpardonable crime, by this sin against the Holy Spirit, the condemnation of eternal fire. For very many are the souls that My justice condemns for sins committed against the

Immaculate Heart of My Mother!”

This is why, according to the message of Fatima, the work which is proper to us, the work most within our grasp, is reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. «You, at least, try to console Me!...»

God is so insistent about this reparation that He has placed it at the beginning and end of the whole great plan revealed at Tuy. First of all at the beginning, for at the same time as the act of consecration, God asks the Pope and the bishops for «*a solemn and public act of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*», undoubtedly for all the profanations and blasphemies committed against Her in Bolshevik Russia by so many fanatical atheists, but also for the *communist revolution* which is itself an abominable crime, since it wrongfully exercises a satanic power over an ancient country of Christendom, which by right belongs to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Reparation figures also at the end of God’s great design, which in fact promises «to end the persecution in Russia», if the Pope and the bishops consecrate it to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, «***and if His Holiness promises, through the end of this persecution, to approve and recommend the practice of the devotion of reparation***» on the first Saturdays of the month. It is an admirable exchange of promises by which God wishes to draw the Vicar of Christ to resolutely commit the whole Church to this reparatory devotion which He so greatly desires to see practiced everywhere.

V. THE APPARITION OF TUY, THE TURNING POINT OF THE CENTURY

From then on, after June 13, 1929, when God completed His solemn revelation of His great design for the Church, for Russia, and the world, one can say that the drama of our century was cast. The outcome depends in the last analysis on the Holy Father, and on him alone. We will explain why. And because the message of Fatima is perfectly limpid and coherent, three propositions, the truth of which is even more striking in 1983 than in 1917 or 1929, sum it all up.

1. WORLD PEACE DEPENDS ON THE CONVERSION OF RUSSIA

«If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted and *there will be peace.*» If

not, Russia «will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions... The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated.» Thus everything had already been said on July 13, 1917. Our Lady even predicted the Second World War, which would be worse than the first, as a direct consequence of the non-conversion of Russia.

We will soon demonstrate the unquestionable historical truth of this surprising statement. As for Soviet expansionism (both ideological and military) prophesied by Our Lady, this too is a fact of history – a more and more prominent fact, which causes the future of the entire world to depend on Russia alone. Solzhenitsyn, who saw this fact, wrote: «Communism cannot stop itself in its desire to conquer the world, whether it be by overt war, subversive and terrorist action, or by the destabilization of social structures... Nothing can be hoped for from communism itself: no compromise with the doctrine of communism is possible; *one can foresee either its total triumph in the whole world, or its complete disappearance everywhere.* The only salvation for Russia, for China and the entire world consists in rejecting it. *Otherwise, the world runs the risk of being ruined and annihilated.*»⁶⁴⁹

This is precisely the prophecy of Fatima. As long as it remains under the communist yoke, Russia will continue to be a perpetual menace for the world, because its Bolshevik revolution is like a growing cancer, which by its nature will never be able to do anything but spread. We must give this serious reflection: the only escape, the only possible salvation for Russia and the world is its conversion... And the latter can only be an extraordinary miracle, granted by God in His mercy.

2. THE CONVERSION OF RUSSIA DEPENDS ON ITS CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Here we are entering into the realm of entirely supernatural faith and hope. Still, this fact is not therefore any less certain than things which are proved empirically; far from it! To the eyes of faith, the plan of salvation revealed at Fatima and Tuy appears as the work of divine wisdom, which has no equal for its unquestionable efficacy. Yes, for every Catholic who understands the profound underlying intention, and the wonderful, supernatural fruits, the two requests of Our Lady appear as the adequate means, the conditions necessary for

the miracle which is possible and so to speak necessary for the conversion of Russia. This is a second truth which, like the first one, is just as certain and even more obvious than it was in 1929.

3. THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY DEPENDS ON THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS

«If the Holy Father will himself make (a solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia) as well as ordering all the bishops of the Catholic world to do the same... The Holy Father must then promise to approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion.» The texts are clear: what room is there for doubt? In God's great design, everything depends in the final analysis on the Supreme Pontiff, and on him alone, since it is for him to order the bishops to make the requested act of consecration with him. The faithful, of course, can also act effectively: by their prayers and sacrifices they merit this grace. Still, this does not change the fact that no decisive solution for the peace and salvation of the world can be reached without the Pope. Here we must be insistent, because this point of the message of Fatima is often passed over in silence. God promises to accomplish miracles of grace through the mediation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but on one formal condition: that the Pastors of the Church solemnly request it of Her, and demonstrate by their obedience to Her requests that, in the face of the extreme perils of the hour, they hope for deliverance from Her and Her alone.

In other words, since the extraordinary trinitarian theophany of Tuy on June 13, 1929, more than ever before everything depends on the Pope: «*The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father...*» It remains for us to examine what his response was to the requests of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

SECTION III: «In the reign of Pius XI»

CHAPTER VII

«THEY DID NOT WANT TO HEED MY REQUEST!» (1925 - 1931)

The facts, alas, are well known. «In the reign of Pius XI», to repeat the expression of the great Secret, Russia was not consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Officially it was not even considered. The devotion of reparation on the five first Saturdays of the month was not approved or even unofficially encouraged by Rome. In other words, nothing was done to fulfil the pressing, urgent requests that Heaven had made of the Sovereign Pontiff.

However, not everything has been said. It remains to find out whether or not the messages of Tuy and Pontevedra were faithfully transmitted to the Holy Father. Was he informed quickly enough about the requests of Our Lady of Fatima, and at the opportune moment when it was possible for him to fulfil them? The majority of Fatima historians, it must be said, avoid asking the question... so as to avoid answering it. Yet, the answer is clear. It is furnished for us by later revelations which Sister Lucy was privileged to receive. Let us recall that the apparition of Tuy took place on June 13, 1929. Now Pope Pius XI knew of the request for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary probably after the month of June 1930 – *without us being able to absolutely exclude an earlier date – and in any case*, he most certainly knew about it before August 31, 1931. Moreover, it is possible that as early as the summer of 1929 he was aware of the apparitions of Pontevedra and Heaven's request concerning the devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. How do we know?

Our historical inquiry is just as groping and incomplete as the Pope's response is certain. We know what his response was through the words of Our Lord to Sister Lucy. Indeed we are far from having access to all the necessary documents. These documents are kept hidden so carefully that we are reminded of the “dark, dark well” which Cardinal Ottaviani would later evoke on the subject of the Secret of Fatima.

In 1971, during the Marian Congress of Fatima, Father Alonso declared: «However, the events of Fatima in the course of the following years (meaning after 1929) will enter a historical phase on which we cannot insist...»⁶⁵⁰ Similarly, the great critical study he published in 1972-1973 in *Ephemerides*

Mariologicae,⁶⁵¹ undoubtedly as an outline of his definitive work, stops precisely at these decisive years 1929-1931. This is very regrettable. For this reason we must first of all call insistently for the publication of all the documents, and particularly the long interrogation of Sister Lucy by Father Alonso, which enabled him to clear up his difficulties. This interrogation, which was conducted after long years of critical work and research, is undoubtedly decisive on many points. Why is it not published?⁶⁵² For Fatima has nothing to fear from the truth.

However, as we wait for all the documents to come to light, we can work at clearing the air somewhat by piecing together numerous scraps of information which are already known. Although this history is certainly very deficient, we can still draw some useful conclusions from it.

I. HOW THE HOLY FATHER WAS INFORMED: THE TRANSMISSION OF THE MESSAGE (1925-1930)

We are compelled to make an initial observation. In the apparitions of Pontevedra in 1925 and 1926, Our Lady no longer requested that the Holy Father or even the Bishop of Leiria be spoken to. She asked only that Lucy make known Her requests and Her great promise.

However, it goes without saying that Lucy, who had entered religious life and was bound by obedience, could do nothing by herself. Our Lady did not ask me «to spread the devotion of reparation», she explained to Father Jongen, «but to make it known». She did so with untiring, ardent love and patience. As for disclosing Heaven's requests, in this Lucy was dependent above all on the cooperation of her confessors.

A PRUDENT RESERVE

We have related how Lucy, who was then a young postulant, informed her superior, Mother Magalhaes, immediately after the apparition of December 10, 1925. We have also described how Mother Magalhaes spoke about it to the confessor of the house, Don Lino Garcia, who preferred to maintain the most prudent reserve. On December 29, Mother Magalhaes informed Bishop da Silva.

She then requested that Lucy write to her former confessor, Msgr. Pereira Lopes. In his response, which was long in coming, he said that «the vision must be repeated, there must be some facts permitting belief in it, and that the Mother Superior alone could not spread the devotion in question.»

To this Our Lord responded on February 15, 1926: «It is enough that your confessor gives you authorization and that your superior announce this for it to be believed by the people, even without knowing to whom it was revealed.»⁶⁵³

In fact, this is exactly how it worked out. In the end Msgr. Pereira Lopes preferred to back off and leave to others the direction of his former student, while Mother Magalhaes, with the consent of Don Lino Garcia, began propagating the devotion of reparation. She taught it first to the students of the house and then, very quickly, it spread to the circle of families who were friendly to the community. «There, in the chapel of Pontevedra, the five first Saturdays of the month were practiced for the first time. In the same place, a little later on, Don Lino Garcia was to celebrate the anniversary of the apparition of December 10 every year.»⁶⁵⁴

Father Francisco Rodrigues, a Jesuit in residence at Pontevedra, was also informed and consulted at the beginning of 1926.⁶⁵⁵ He too was favourable to the devotion.

After ten months of postulancy, however, Maria das Dores left Pontevedra on July 16, 1926,⁶⁵⁶ for the novitiate of Tuy.

FATHER APARICIO: A WISE AND FIRM ADHERENCE

«When I arrived at Tuy (Sister Lucy declared to Father Jongen), I described Our Lady's request to the confessor at that time, the Reverend Father José da Silva Aparicio, superior of the Jesuit Fathers' residence in the city.»⁶⁵⁷ Father Aparicio was a man of both age and experience, and very serious-minded.⁶⁵⁸ First of all, he took some time to think about it.

On October 2, 1926, Lucy received the habit of the Dorothean Sisters. She did not forget her mission. On July 24, 1927, still burning with the desire to implement the requests of Our Lady, she explained them fervently and insistently in a letter to her mother: «... I would like you to offer generously to

the Blessed Virgin this act of reparation for the offences She receives from Her ungrateful children.» Without indicating the source, she then explains with great emotion in what the practice of the five first Saturdays consists.⁶⁵⁹ On November 1, she makes the same request of her godmother.⁶⁶⁰ On Christmas Day, 1927, she concludes a letter to her mother: «I pray that I can continue to make known and to practice the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary...»⁶⁶¹

It is important to note that Father Aparicio was quickly and utterly convinced of the supernatural origin of Sister Lucy's recent revelations. When he was appointed Master of Novices at Oya on September 24, 1927, he in turn made great efforts to propagate the devotion of reparation. He wrote as much to Sister Lucy, in a letter which today has been lost. However, we still possess the seer's response dated December 4, 1927, in which she expresses to him her great joy over this fact:

«Your Reverence can have no idea of the consolation I felt on learning that over there (at the novitiate of the Jesuit Fathers) they had embraced the devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

«I also learned through the Reverend Mother Superior of Lisbon that the entire community, little girls and even families had begun practising it. With great pleasure I learned that at Fatima many people had already copied an image which I had sent to my mother, concerning which I had written.»⁶⁶²

After receiving such an enthusiastic letter, Father Aparicio decided to do even more. He came to Tuy to obtain more precise information from the seer. He then asked her to write down, once again, a detailed account of the apparitions of Pontevedra, and also indicate if they were connected with the messages of 1917.

THE COMMUNICATION OF DECEMBER 17, 1927. This last request threw our seer into a profound perplexity, from which a new divine communication delivered her. In this text, Lucy speaks about herself in the third person:

«On December 17, 1927, she approached the tabernacle and asked Jesus how to satisfy the request made of her, if the origin of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was included in the Secret which the Most Holy Virgin had entrusted to her.

«Jesus, in a distinct voice, made her hear these words: “My daughter, write everything that is asked of you; also write everything the Most Holy Virgin revealed to you in the apparition when She spoke to you of this devotion; as for the rest of the Secret, keep silence.”»⁶⁶³

Taking advantage of this permission which had been granted her to partially reveal the Secret, Lucy then related the manifestation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 13, 1917, as well as the two apparitions of Pontevedra.⁶⁶⁴

FATHER APARICIO PROPAGATES THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION. We must now quote a decisive testimony, which reveals to us the sentiments of Father Aparicio and the total confidence he had in the seer of Fatima and Pontevedra. It is a letter of Father Antonio Leite, S.J., dated August 11, 1967, and addressed to Father Alonso. We quote from the essential part:

«In September of 1927, Father José Aparicio, S.J., left the office of Superior of the Society of Jesus at Tuy, and secretary of our provincial.⁶⁶⁵ He was sent to Oya (near La Guardia) where the novitiate of the Portuguese province was then exiled. On September 24, he became Master of Novices.

«Although he lived at Oya, he frequently went to Tuy, which is not very far. Indeed for some time longer he continued in the office of consultor of the Province. The Provincial normally resided in this Galician city. I entered the novitiate shortly after, on October 31 of the same year, 1927. The following day my older brother José, already a priest residing at Rome, made his first vows.

«In the conferences he gave us, and in particular conversations, in public and during recreations, etc, Father Aparicio frequently spoke to us of Fatima, of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and of Lucy. The last few years he had been her confessor and he was still more or less her spiritual director. When he went to Tuy, which he did quite frequently, I believe that he usually heard her confession, as well as the confessions of the other nuns who asked him.

«I recall that some time after my entry into the novitiate, on a date I cannot exactly remember, *but perhaps around the end of 1927 or the beginning of the next year, he spoke to us about the devotion of the five first Saturdays and told us where it originated.* However, he recommended that we say

nothing concerning its origin until His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria, who had already been informed about it, made it public or allowed it to be published.

«On the evenings before the first Saturdays, Father Aparicio was in the habit of giving us points of meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary for the next day, so that in this way we could fulfil more easily the conditions required for the first Saturdays.

«In order that we might possess the exact words of Our Lady, *Father Aparicio distributed to us a little mimeographed sheet with the exact text of Lucy*. I did not save this paper but my brother, Father José Leite, kept it and I hold it today in my hands. *I am sending a photocopy of it to Your Reverence*. Father Aparicio was the spiritual director of the students who had already made their vows, my brother was among them; he spoke to them also about the devotion of the first Saturdays and distributed the same paper to them...

«For the reason indicated above, because His Grace the Bishop of Leiria had not yet revealed the origin of the devotion of the first Saturdays, on the little sheet that he gave us Father Aparicio wrote only: “It is based on a revelation made to a servant of God.” *But he expressly told us novices and Jesuit students that the person in question was Lucy*. I remember very well how we novices sometimes used to say (perhaps we were boasting!) that we were the first people in the world to practice the devotion of the first Saturdays, which was then completely unknown...⁶⁶⁶

«All this continued until September, 1929, for at that moment Father Aparicio was sent to our minor seminary at St. Martin de Trevejo (Caceres), and I never again lived in the same house with him...

«I forgot to mention that Father Aparicio was also in the habit of referring to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, relating it to Fatima at a time when, I believe, people spoke only of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. And in fact, on the paper I mentioned and which I am sending to Your Reverence, we find the words: “Devotion of the five Saturdays in honour of the Immaculate Heart.”»⁶⁶⁷

There is the evidence, enough to blow the fragile critical construction of Father

Dhanis to bits! This letter also shows us that Lucy's testimony was clear and convincing. It was perfectly credible for this circumspect Jesuit who knew the soul of the seer. It also appears that Father Aparicio at that time was doing everything possible to correspond faithfully to Our Lady's request.

CANON FORMIGAO: AN ENTHUSIASTIC ADHERENCE

On September 9, 1928, Sister Lucy had written to Canon Formigao to invite him to the ceremony of her first vows.⁶⁶⁸ Fortunately, the apostle of Fatima was able to reply to her pressing invitation. He arrived at Tuy on October 2, to participate in the ceremony for the following day. We have a letter of his dated October 8, 1928, where he describes the event. Again, this is an extremely valuable testimony, jotted down quickly and with great spontaneity:

«I have just returned from Spain. I was present at the profession of Lucy, which took place on the 3rd, the feast day of little Saint Therese. Because the car which was to take him to the train broke down, His Grace Don José (da Silva) did not preside at the feast, which was charming.⁶⁶⁹

«The little girl is always the same, just as you knew her. She is endowed with an admirable simplicity and humility. What profound piety, so remarkable and so joyous at the same time! What an extraordinary spirit of obedience! What love for sacrifice and mortification!

«The evening before, when she had already finished her retreat, I was the only person granted permission to speak with her and be alone with her. These were hours of ineffable spiritual joy! I will never, ever forget them.

«I had already been aware for a few months, due to a letter from the novice mistress, that she had been the object of a new revelation. Here is the subject of the revelation: Our Lord is profoundly displeased with the offences made against His Most Holy Mother, and He can no longer tolerate them. Because of these sins, because of these outrages and blasphemies, which cause so much suffering to the most loving Heart of the Son, many souls have fallen into hell and many others are in danger of being lost. Our Lord promises to save them to the degree this devotion is practiced, with the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of our Most Holy Mother. This is the devotion of reparation to the

Immaculate Heart of Mary during five months...⁶⁷⁰

«Father Mateo came to intensify the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, now Lucy comes to intensify the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which is its necessary complement. Thus by these two devotions of reparation, the offences against the Son and the Mother are atoned for, as is absolutely just.

«Yesterday afternoon, I ran to Porto by car (sic) to make known this devotion, which was welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm...»⁶⁷¹

Saints understand each other so well! The servant of God heard the seer describe the apparitions of Pontevedra to him and it was enough. No sooner did he hear it than he adhered to it with all his heart, and burned with the desire to make known this devotion of reparation requested by Heaven, and have it practiced everywhere. Just as in 1917, Doctor Formigao was to become one of the first apostles of the apparitions of Pontevedra.

TOWARDS AN EPISCOPAL APPROVAL?

In fact, right after Sister Lucy's profession Canon Formigao approached Bishop da Silva. At the time the bishop was at the *Formigueira*, the country home situated near Braga. Full of enthusiasm, Canon Formigao pleaded for the devotion of reparation. He brought the bishop a short letter written by Lucy for his intention:

«The good Lord, in His infinite mercy, complains that He is no longer able to bear the offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of the Most Holy Virgin (only on May 30, 1930 did Lucy receive a more complete revelation on the five blasphemies that outrage the Immaculate Heart of Mary). He says that because of this sin a great number of souls fall into hell, and He promises to save them in the measure that the following devotion is practiced, with the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of our Most Holy Mother. *I come therefore, most excellent and reverend Lord, with the approval of my confessor and my most reverend Mother Superior, and to satisfy the desires of Our Lord, to humbly ask your most Reverend Excellency to grant it his approval.*» Lucy then goes on to explain the great promise.⁶⁷²

Here we have a new and important element: Our Lord informed His messenger that He now desired the Church, in the person of the Bishop of Leiria, to officially approve the devotion of reparation. Was this not, indeed, the only way of widely propagating it among the Christian people?

What was Bishop da Silva's response? We have said that he had been kept abreast of the apparitions of Pontevedra for quite some time. The testimony of Canon Formigao confirms that he had no doubt about their supernatural origin, and that he had no serious objection keeping him from approving the devotion of the first Saturdays. Indeed, Canon Formigao continues his account:

«His Grace Don José (da Silva), whom I went to see at Braga to talk about this matter, has authorized me to spread this devotion of reparation already, privately. *In a little while he will promulgate a public and official document, recommending it and granting it indulgences.*»⁶⁷³

As we will see, the promise was not kept, but the promise nevertheless showed an agreement in principle! A few days later Father Aparicio, who had also attended Lucy's profession, spoke to the bishop in turn. In a letter dated October 11, 1928, he gave him the most detailed account of the Pontevedra apparitions, which had been written by Sister Lucy in December of 1927.⁶⁷⁴ Yet, in spite of all these insistent requests, Bishop da Silva let months and years go by... without doing anything. Before approving it, he explained, the devotion of reparation first had to be spread among the faithful... He also thought that the pilgrimages to Fatima from May 13 to October 13 were the essential request of Our Lady.⁶⁷⁵ But were not all these answers excuses rather than solid reasons? For his promises about finally giving his official approval, repeated so often during this month of October 1928, were surely not false. But he undoubtedly feared taking upon himself such a responsibility, without Rome's confirmation. What would the Pope say about such an initiative? And he constantly delayed the hour of his decision...

AFTER THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA. The great trinitarian apparition and the request concerning Russia took place on June 13, 1929. Sister Lucy immediately informed her confessor, Father Bernardo Gonçalves, but probably no one else. No doubt she wished that Bishop da Silva first be informed before she mentioned it to any others. Thus Father Aparicio was not informed right away.

THE VISIT OF THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO: JULY 1, 1929

In June of 1928, Archbishop Giovanni Beda Cardinale had been appointed apostolic nuncio to Portugal, to succeed Archbishop Nicotra. From June 26-30, 1929, a Eucharistic Congress took place in Spain, at Viana do Castelo. The nuncio, who was present at this congress, took advantage of the occasion to visit Lucy. The visit was so discreet that the diary of the Tuy community does not even mention it. Only through a passing reference by Sister Lucy do we learn of this important encounter. For the seer, with courage, dared to speak to the representative of the Holy Father concerning the reparatory devotion of the five first Saturdays of the month.

Sister Lucy gathered that her initiative would hardly be appreciated by her bishop. She wrote to him the next day, and at the end of the letter informed him of her daring endeavour:

«Yesterday we were visited by His Grace the Nuncio. I asked of His Excellency the favour of approving the devotion with which Your Excellency is already familiar. And, since His Excellency (the nuncio) asked me who was to be approached, I answered: Your Excellency (Bishop da Silva) or the Mother Superior. I humbly kiss Your Excellency's hand.»⁶⁷⁶

Father Alonso comments that «as he received this letter, Don José must have been struck with astonishment at Lucy's courage... and we can say that *it cannot have pleased him very much*. It is certain that the nuncio consulted Don José... and everything remained in the reserve that Don José had imposed from the beginning of this delicate affair.»⁶⁷⁷

The following months must have been a cruel torment for Heaven's messenger. On August 16, 1929, right after visiting Sister Lucy at Tuy, Father Aparicio wrote once more to Bishop da Silva: «She still anxiously desires that the devotion of the five first Saturdays in honour of Our Lady be spread.» In the same letter, he also wrote:

«I am told that Sister Mary Lucy desires to speak with your Most Reverend Excellency; and I believe that if you were able to slip away and come to Tuy she would be very happy.»⁶⁷⁸

What regret the seer must have experienced, surely desiring to pass on the urgent request concerning Russia, when she learned that Bishop da Silva had come to Spain for the Eucharistic Congress of Viano do Castelo, but had left the nuncio to come to Tuy by himself!

Lucy wrote a second letter to her bishop. He made no response and contented himself with writing to Father Aparicio on September 29: «The First Saturday devotion is good, but its hour has not come yet, which doesn't mean it should not be propagated in religious houses and colleges.»⁶⁷⁹ Father Aparicio passed on the disappointing response to Sister Lucy. She wrote back to Father Aparicio on December 15, 1929:

«As for the reply of his Most Reverend Excellency, His Grace the Bishop, it was a very painful blow for me. But may the most holy will of the Good Lord be done. In His infinite mercy, He has found a way of encouraging me, letting me know that, through His grace, love for the Immaculate Heart of our Most Holy Mother and the desire to make reparation to it are being kindled in souls imperceptibly.»

Sister Lucy concludes on a note of astonishment: She still had not received the letter from Bishop da Silva.⁶⁸⁰

MAY, 1930: HEAVEN CLARIFIES ITS REQUESTS

A new frontier was crossed in the beginning of 1930. Our Lord informed His messenger that the two requests for the consecration of Russia and the devotion of reparation were to be addressed, together, *to the Holy Father himself*.

Father Gonçalves had been informed, and he may have realized that the hour was in fact more favourable than ever. Had not the Holy Father just organized, at Rome, a solemn ceremony of reparation for the persecution in Russia? He ordered Sister Lucy to «put all that in writing».

Towards the end of May, Sister Lucy obeyed this order by a very important letter. We now have many excerpts from it, but it needs to be quoted at length, in its historical context:

«This is what seems to have passed between God and my soul, concerning the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the

persecution in Russia.

THE REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE REPARATORY DEVOTION.

«It seems that Our Good Lord deep in my heart, *urges me to ask the Holy Father's approval for the devotion* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that God Himself and the Blessed Virgin asked for in 1925.

«By means of this little devotion, They wish to grant forgiveness to those souls who have had the misfortune of offending the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

«And the Most Blessed Virgin promises the souls of those who seek to make reparation to Her in this way that She will assist them at the hour of their death with all the graces necessary for their salvation.

«This devotion consists of the following: receiving Holy Communion on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, saying the Rosary and keeping Our Lady company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, and going to confession with the same purpose. The confession can be made another day.»

THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA. «If I am not mistaken, the good Lord promises to put an end to the persecution in Russia, if the Holy Father himself deigns to make a solemn and public act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as well as ordering all the bishops of the Catholic world to do the same, and *if the Holy Father promises that*, upon the end of this persecution, *he will approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion* already described.»

THE SEER'S STATE OF SOUL. «I declare being very much afraid of making a mistake, and the cause of this fear is the fact that I did not see Our Lord personally, but only felt His Divine Presence.

«About the repugnance that I have of telling this to Reverend Mother Superior, I do not know exactly where it comes from; it may be partly fear that the Reverend Mother will disapprove of all this, or say that it is an illusion, or a suggestion of the devil and things of that sort.

«I respectfully kiss the hand of Your Reverence.»⁶⁸¹

It must be made clear, with Father Alonso, that the doubts and fears about being mistaken which Lucy mentions do not refer to the revelations of Pontevedra, or the trinitarian vision at Tuy. They concern only the final point which she states here for the first time, following a supernatural light which was not accompanied by a perceptible apparition of Our Lord. At issue was whether it was fitting or not that the Holy Father promise to approve the devotion of reparation when the conversion of Russia is obtained.

Besides, the expression of such doubts or uncertainty should not surprise us. They are found several times in the letters of Sister Lucy, and similar expressions are found in the letters of Saint Margaret Mary. These reservations are absolutely normal coming from the pen of a true Catholic mystic. It is their absence which would be troubling. Indeed, in this case it is not an external, sensible manifestation that the seer can witness to with the absolute certainty that she has seen or heard something. «I merely felt His Divine Presence», Lucy writes. She can be sure of «having felt» It. But how can she affirm, on her own, that it was in fact God Who manifested Himself to her? The Church is the judge of that. And the humble doubt of the seer, who defers to the judgment of her director, testifies in her favour. In Sister Lucy's case, it is remarkable that her confessors – and she happened to have many of them, who were all men of great knowledge and experience – never doubted the authenticity of her revelations, any more than Bishop da Silva or her superiors in religion.

A DETAILED QUESTIONNAIRE. Father Gonçalves received Sister Lucy's letter on May 29, 1930. As soon as he read it, he typed a precise questionnaire which was given to Sister Lucy the same day. No doubt he desired a perfectly clear document to transmit to superior authorities.

«Please answer, as far as possible, on a sheet of letter paper, the following questions:

1. When, how and where, in other words, the date (if you know it), the occasion and the manner in which the Saturday devotion was revealed to you.
2. The conditions required, meaning what is asked for in the accomplishment of this devotion.
3. The advantages: what graces are promised to those who will practise it at

least once?

4. Why five Saturdays and not nine, or seven, in honour of Our Lady's Sorrows?

5. If the conditions cannot all be fulfilled on Saturday, can they be fulfilled on Sunday? People in the country, for example, very often cannot do so (on Saturday), because they live far away...

6. In relation to the salvation of poor Russia, what do you desire or want?»⁶⁸²

THE REVELATION OF MAY 29, 1930. On the same evening, May 29, which was also Ascension Thursday, Lucy made her holy hour of adoration and reparation as usual. At that time she implored and received all the enlightenment necessary to answer the questions she had been asked.

In the next few days she wrote a long letter, which Father Gonçalves received on June 12, 1930:⁶⁸³

«After asking for the assistance of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I will answer as well as I can the questions that you asked me, concerning the five Saturday devotion.

THE PONTEVEDRA APPARITIONS

1. When? On December 10, 1925.

How? Our Lord appeared to me as well as the Blessed Virgin, showing me Her Immaculate Heart surrounded by thorns, and asking for reparation.

Where? At Pontevedra (Travessia de Isabel II). The first apparition (took place) in my room, the second by the gate of the garden where I was working.

2. Required conditions?

For five months every first Saturday, receive Holy Communion, say the Rosary, keep Our Lady company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, and go to confession with the same goal

in mind. Confession can be made on another day, as long as one is in the state of grace when one receives Holy Communion.

3. Benefits or promises.

“To the souls who in this manner try to make reparation to Me (says Our Lady), I promise to assist them at the hour of their death with all the graces necessary for their salvation.”

THE REVELATION OF MAY 29, 1930

4. Why should it be five Saturdays and not nine or seven in honour of the Sorrows of Our Lady?

While staying in the chapel with Our Lord part of the night, between the 29th and the 30th of this month of May 1930, and speaking to Our Good Lord about questions 4 and 5, I felt myself being more possessed by the Divine Presence, and if I am not mistaken, the following was revealed to me:

“My daughter, the motive is simple: there are five ways in which people offend and blaspheme against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

1. The blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception.
2. The blasphemies against Her Virginity.
3. The blasphemies against Her Divine Maternity, refusing at the same time to accept Her as the Mother of all mankind.
4. The blasphemies of those who try publicly to implant in children's hearts indifference, contempt and even hate against this Immaculate Mother.
5. The offences of those who insult Her directly in Her sacred images.

“Here, my daughter, is the reason why the Immaculate Heart of Mary made Me ask for this little act of reparation and, in consideration of it, move My mercy to forgive those souls who had the misfortune of offending Her. As for you, try incessantly with all your prayers and sacrifices to move Me to

mercy toward those poor souls.”

THE PRACTICE OF THE REPARATORY DEVOTION ON SUNDAYS

5. “And if one could not accomplish all those obligations on a Saturday, would Sunday not do?”

“The practice of this devotion will be equally accepted on the Sunday following the first Saturday, when, for just reasons, My priests will allow it.”

THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA

6. «Regarding Russia, if I am not mistaken, Our Good Lord promises to put an end to the persecution in Russia, if the Holy Father himself deigns to make, and orders the Bishops of the Catholic world to equally make, a solemn and public act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and if His Holiness promises at the end of this persecution to approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion indicated above.»⁶⁸⁴

FATHER GONÇALVES PASSES ON THE REQUESTS TO BISHOP DA SILVA AND THE HOLY FATHER

On the following day, June 13, 1930, Father Gonçalves sent the Bishop of Leiria a copy of this letter, which was so firm and precise. On July 1, Bishop da Silva answered him, «telling him laconically that he already knew of this matter and that he was going to think about it».⁶⁸⁵ On August 28, he came to Tuy for the first time. We read in the convent diary for August 29, 1930: «After coffee, His Grace remained some time with Sister Dores who is from Fatima and is a protégée of His Grace.»⁶⁸⁶

We also know that at precisely this time the bishop was in close contact with Rome concerning the upcoming publication of official approval of the Fatima apparitions. Did he take advantage of the occasion to pass on Heaven’s requests to Rome? Or did he do it orally only, or by some intermediary? We do not know.

Yet, in August 1931, Our Lord in speaking to Sister Lucy gave her to understand in all clarity that the Holy Father had been informed of His requests. But how?

After the disappointing reply of Bishop da Silva, Father Gonçalves probably tried to pass on Heaven's requests to Pope Pius XI through other channels. This would hardly be difficult for a Jesuit. Besides, Father Gonçalves was the Superior of a community. He had many avenues open for reaching the Pope. In her letter to Pope Pius XII, Lucy writes: «Some time after (June 13, 1929), I gave an account of it to my confessor *who employed certain means to bring it to the knowledge of H.H. Pius XI.*»⁶⁸⁷

Similarly, answering one of Father Jongen's questions in 1946, Sister Lucy clearly indicates that Father Gonçalves took the initiative of approaching the Pope:

«... I gave an account of Our Lady's request concerning the consecration of Russia to the Reverend Father Francisco Rodrigues, who often used to stay here when he was in Portugal, and to the Reverend Father José Bernardo Gonçalves, who had come to replace the Reverend Father Aparicio. He is currently Superior of the mission of Zambezia, at the mission of Lifidge (Mozambique). *This Father ordered me to put it in writing, promised me that he would work for the fulfilment of Our Lady's desires, informed His Grace the Bishop of Leiria about everything, and obtained that the request arrived at the knowledge of H.H. Pius XI.*»⁶⁸⁸

As subsequent events will show, Pope Pius XI was surely informed about Heaven's requests between July of 1930 and August of 1931. In other words, he was informed at the very moment when God's hour for the fulfilment of His great design had struck.

II. IT WAS TRULY GOD'S HOUR

«*The moment has come* when God asks the Holy Father...», Our Lady declared on June 13, 1929. At the beginning of her account, Sister Lucy repeats the same expression: «At this time Our Lord informed me that *the moment had come* for me to let Holy Church know His desire for the consecration of Russia and His promise to convert it.»

God never asks for the impossible. Indeed, for anyone who studies the history of Pope Pius XI's pontificate, it becomes clear that these years 1929-1931 were in fact the most favourable for the fulfilment of Heaven's designs. It must also be

said without fear: at that time the requests of Our Lady of Fatima could easily have been fulfilled to the letter, for multiple and convergent reasons.

1. THE HOUR OF FATIMA

In fact, when the Holy Father was informed of the requests of Our Lady, the subject was no longer foreign to him. For over a year he had made known his unofficial approval of the apparitions.⁶⁸⁹ He knew about the incomparable miracles of grace worked at the Cova da Iria. He could not help but notice the wonderful religious, political and social renewal that followed the event of Fatima.

Might he have still had on his desk the thick dossier of the diocesan canonical inquiry that Bishop da Silva had just sent him? In that dossier he was able to read the accounts of the extraordinary dance of the sun. The dossier also contained accounts of the miraculous healings and innumerable conversions which continued to take place at the Cova da Iria. And had he not given his confirmation to the official recognition of the apparitions by the Bishop of Leiria? He knew that an eminent Jesuit of the biblical institute, Father da Fonseca, was, so to speak, the Roman specialist on the question of Fatima. The latter had given a conference at Rome on Fatima and many of the curial Cardinals had been present.

In short, 1929-1931 were the years when Pope Pius XI, with full knowledge, had already made up his mind in favour of the Fatima apparitions. He knew at least that the subject was serious and important.

2. THE HOUR OF THE SACRED HEART

Now what had Our Lady of Fatima requested? A consecration of Russia to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Was not this consecration in line with a tradition which was very much alive? Had not Pope Leo XIII opened the way, providentially, by solemnly consecrating the whole world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus? This act of June 11, 1899, which Leo XIII had called the most important of his pontificate, was still present in everybody's memory. Saint Pius X had ordered that it be renewed each year. And Pope Pius XI himself in *Quas Primas* had ordered in 1925 that in the future this consecration was to be renewed on the

Feast of Christ the King.

Were there theological difficulties in the Pope and the Catholic Bishops consecrating schismatic and Bolshevik Russia, without any participation of its natural political and ecclesial authorities? No. The doctrinal justification for the act requested at Tuy in 1929, is already luminously explained in *Annum Sacrum*, Leo XIII's encyclical of May 25, 1899.

Yes, the Pope explained then, the whole world and all nations, even heretical, schismatic or pagan ones, can be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: «Indeed the empire of Jesus Christ does not extend to Catholic nations only. Again, it is not only over men who have been purified in the water of baptism *and who belong by right to the Church*, although erroneous opinions separate them from it and schism cuts them off from its charity. *But the power of Christ extends also over all those who live outside the Christian faith*; it is thus an unquestionable truth that the whole human race is under the power of Jesus Christ.»⁶⁹⁰

After having invited each one of the faithful to consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Leo XIII added:

«But will we not have a thought for these innumerable multitudes who have not yet seen the brightness of Christian truth? We hold the place of Him Who came to save what was lost, He Who offered His Blood for the salvation of the human race. We too must take assiduous care to draw the unfortunate ones sitting in the shadow of death to Him Who is the true life: everywhere we shall send them messengers of Christ to instruct them. *And now, full of compassion for their lot, We consecrate them in a most special way and as far as in Us lies, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*»⁶⁹¹

Everything had been said. This beautiful doctrine need only have been applied to the particular case of Russia.

Moreover, a precedent had been set. Pope Leo XIII had done the consecration of the world to obey the requests of the Sacred Heart given to a holy nun, Mother Mary of the Divine Heart.⁶⁹²

3. THE HOUR OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Heaven willed that the Immaculate Heart of Mary be closely associated with the Heart of Jesus. The consecration of Russia was to be done «to the Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary».

Once again we must point to a wonderful, providential preparation that rendered this act possible and even easy. For almost a century, devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary had developed intensely among the Christian people.⁶⁹³

Beginning in 1864, unceasing, repeated requests had been addressed to the Holy See to obtain the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Only a few examples need be cited. This request was made at the national Marian Congress of Lyon-Fourvière, in September 1900. «In the same year, 1900, Father Deschamps founded at Toulouse *The Marian Crusade*, whose purpose was to promote the consecration of individuals, families, parishes, dioceses, and the whole human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»

During the pontificate of Saint Pius X, who was known to be favourable to the project, petitions multiplied, representing thousands of adherents. There were the petitions of Father Deschamps along with the archconfraternity of Our Lady of Victories in 1906; that of Father Gebhard in 1907; those of Father Dore, Superior General of the Eudists, in 1908 and 1912; and finally those of Father Lintelo, a Belgian Jesuit, in 1914.

Already in July 1911, in the Brief approving the Marian Congress of Salzburg, Saint Pius X had expressed his desire «to see the Catholics of the whole world consecrated to Mary, their common Mother and Queen of the World.» «As for the project of the consecration of the world», Saint Pius X answered Father Gebhard, «I see no great difficulty there. Naturally, such things must be done according to established rules and it will be the business of the Congregation of Rites to study it; *but, I repeat, I see no difficulty there... Nothing is more pleasing to me than such a petition... I am always happy to do something for Our Lady.*»

In 1914, the organizers of the Eucharistic Congress at Lourdes asked the Holy Father to make the pontifical legate perform the consecration of the world to Mary in his name, right there at Lourdes. The Holy Father answered «*that the Holy Father reserved this exceptional act for an exclusively Marian occasion.*».⁶⁹⁴

Saint Pius X had done much, if not the essential part, by giving his accord in principle. But undoubtedly he hoped for a providential sign that such a decisive

act would correspond to a desire of Heaven, and be accomplished at the hour chosen by God. Now this hour had not yet come... The holy Pope knew it, and while he rejoiced to see consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary increase from day to day, he decided to wait.

Our Lady of the Rosary, appearing in 1917, proved him right. She announced that She would come later on to ask, not for the consecration of the world, but only the consecration of Bolshevik Russia, so that the miracle of conversion and peace would be more striking.

Under Benedict XV the movement had continued. In 1921, Cardinal Mercier had obtained the restoration of the feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces. In 1927, the oriental Marian Congress which was held at Paris, then the national congress at Chartres, and the national congress at Lourdes in 1930, all made the same request of the Sovereign Pontiff: the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

For his part, in the retreats which he was preaching all over the world, Father Mateo declared:

«Many are the souls who desire to see the beautiful day dawn when the Roman Pontiff will consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, completing in this way, I would say, the gesture of Leo XIII, renewed so magnificently by His Holiness Pius XI at the closing of the Holy Year, for the first Feast of the Divine Kingship. There is no need to say how much we share in this delicate thought, and how ardently we desire to hasten the hour of grace that this official consecration will be... Let there be no doubt that at the hour willed by Heaven, the Vicar of Jesus Christ will fulfil His own desires and those of the Universal Church, solemnly entrusting to Mary's Heart the victory and reign of the Heart of Jesus.»⁶⁹⁵

It cannot be denied that if, at that time, the Pope had made known the request of Our Lady of Fatima and decided to fulfil it, this solemn act would have stirred up fervent enthusiasm and an immense movement of Marian devotion among the whole Christian people.

4. THE HOUR OF RUSSIA

We will soon see that since the first month of his pontificate in 1922, right up to the years 1930-1931, Russia had always been among the Holy Father's greatest preoccupations. He had tried everything, attempted everything, to attenuate the misery of the Russian people and put an end to the bloody persecution. In vain. In 1922 he had indulged the ejaculatory prayer: «Saviour of the world, save Russia!»⁶⁹⁶ Alas, two years later, the Bolshevik Revolution began ravaging Mexico, yet another country of Christendom! In 1928, all contact had been broken off with the Soviet regime, and Stalin, more cynical than ever, resumed the persecution and the massacres with diabolical malice.

On August 19, 1929, the Pope had published a prayer enriched with indulgences, confiding the Russian people to the protection of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.⁶⁹⁷ Beginning in November 1929, conferences were organized in Rome, and later on in Paris, London, Prague, Geneva and other cities to inform the Christian people about the persecutions Russia was undergoing.

THE CEREMONY OF REPARATION ON MARCH 19, 1930. Pope Pius XI realized that something more had to be done. In a public letter dated February 2, 1930, addressed to Cardinal Pompili, Vicar of Rome, the Pope wrote:

«We feel profound emotion at the thought of the horrible crimes and sacrileges against God and against souls which every day are repeated and aggravated among the innumerable peoples of Russia, who are all dear to Our heart, if only by the greatness of their sufferings. To these peoples belong many children and devoted and generous ministers of this holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church; they have been devoted and generous even unto heroism and martyrdom.»

After mentioning all his interventions in favour of the Russian people, the Pope continued:

«The renewal and official publicity given to so many acts of blasphemy and impiety requires *a more universal and solemn reparation*. This past year during the Christmas holy days, not only were hundreds of churches closed, great numbers of icons burned, all workers and schoolchildren compelled to work, and Sundays suppressed, but they even compelled factory workers, both men and women, to sign a declaration of formal apostasy and hatred against God, or else be deprived of their bread rationing cards, clothing and lodging, without which every inhabitant of this poor country is reduced to

dying of hunger, misery and cold. Among other things, in all the cities and many villages, infamous carnival spectacles were organized, as foreign diplomats saw with their very eyes at Moscow itself, at the centre of the capital, during the Christmas holy days last year: they witnessed a procession of tanks manned by numerous ruffians clad with sacred vestments, taking the cross in derision and spitting upon it while other armoured cars transported huge Christmas trees, from which marionettes representing Catholic and Orthodox bishops were hung by the neck. In the centre of the city, other young hoodlums committed all sorts of sacrileges against the cross.

«We wish therefore, to the best of Our ability, to make *an act of reparation for all these sacrilegious acts, and also to invite the faithful of the whole world to make reparation*, and so we have resolved, Eminence, on the feast of Saint Joseph, March 19, 1930, to come to Our basilica of Saint Peter and to celebrate there, over the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, *a Mass of expiation, propitiation and reparation for so many criminal offences against the Divine Heart of Jesus*, for the salvation of so many souls put to such a hard and painful trial, and also for the relief of Our dear Russian people, so that this long tribulation may finally cease, and peoples and individuals may return as quickly as possible to the one and only flock of Our only Saviour and Liberator, Our Lord Jesus Christ. After having asked His Sacred Heart to grant pardon and take pity on the victims and the murderers themselves, *We will implore the holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God*, Her chaste Spouse, Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, the particular protectors of Russia: the holy angels, Saint John the Baptist, Saint John Chrysostom, Saints Cyril and Methodius as well as many other saints and particularly Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, to whom We have especially entrusted the future of these souls.»⁶⁹⁸

Finally, the Sovereign Pontiff invited «the clergy and people of Rome», «*all his brothers in the Catholic episcopate and the whole Christian world*», to join «in this solemn supplication», «on this day or another day fixed for this end.» He granted his blessing «to all those who would participate in this crusade of prayers.»

On June 30, 1930, in a consistorial Allocution, the Pope recalled the ceremony of March 19. He declared:

«Our appeal was heard by the whole world, not only by Catholics, but also by a great number of dissidents: in a quasi-fraternal union, they too offered their prayers in their churches, and they too wanted to manifest all their gratitude to us, in public and in private.»

The Pope then decided that the prayers after Mass would be said in the future for the conversion of Russia.⁶⁹⁹

5. THE PROVIDENTIAL HOUR

In this context, when Russia was in the forefront of current events, the requests of Our Lady of Fatima formulated at Tuy the previous year came to the knowledge of the Holy Father. They were so conformable to the purest Catholic spirit that spontaneously, faced with the current events, the Pope had already fulfilled a first part of Heaven's stipulations: the public act of reparation to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.⁷⁰⁰

It would have been easy to complete this initial act to obey with exactitude the requests of Heaven, to which such wonderful promises were attached. Providence even seemed to offer the most favourable occasion to perform this extraordinary act, and thus obtain the salvation of poor Russia...

In fact in a letter of December 25, 1930, addressed to Cardinal Pompili, the Pope announced that the fifteen hundredth anniversary of the Council of Ephesus would take place in 1931. To consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary could anyone have chosen a more appropriate date than this solemnity in honour of the Mother of God, this *Theotokos* so dear to the Russian Church, and all Eastern Christians? Some act of the Sovereign Pontiff was expected to mark this anniversary... «The Catholic world (Father Geenen writes) had hoped that this anniversary of the proclamation of the Divine Maternity would be the exclusively Marian event mentioned by Saint Pius X in his response to the organizers of the Lourdes Congress in 1914. However, the encyclical on the subject, *Lux veritatis*, remained silent on the subject and did not mention a word about it. Rome kept silence.»⁷⁰¹

III. THE FIRST REFUSAL OF POPE PIUS XI

The Pope, indeed, had decided to do nothing: neither the consecration of the world, still so warmly desired by the faithful, nor the consecration of Russia, urgently requested by Heaven.

The year 1931 went by sadly, completely occupied by other concerns and other projects. On February 12, for the first time in history the Pope directly addressed the whole world in a radio message; but he spoke neither of Russia nor the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On May 10, he wrote a letter to the German bishops to commemorate the seventh centennial of the death of Saint Elizabeth, “glory of the German people”; but for the thirteenth of May, when all the Portuguese bishops were meeting at Fatima for the solemn consecration of their country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Vatican remained silent. On May 15, the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* briefly took up the question of communism; but neither Russia nor Spain, where the Bolsheviks had already burned over fifty churches since the creation of the Republic, were cited by name. The situation in Spain still did not disturb the Sovereign Pontiff. On June 29, he published a vehement encyclical, *Non abbiamo bisogno...* against Mussolini. The anniversary of the Council of Ephesus had gone by without anything extraordinary to mark it. The encyclical *Lux veritatis*, commemorating the event and in which the Pope announced the creation of the feast of the Divine Maternity of Mary, appeared only at the end of the year, on December 25, 1931.⁷⁰²

THE TERRIBLE REVELATION OF SUMMER, 1931: «THEY DID NOT WANT TO HEED MY REQUEST»

In August 1931, Sister Lucy was not in good health. She was sent by her superiors to Rianjo, a small maritime city near Pontevedra, where she was to take some rest in a friendly house.⁷⁰³ It was undoubtedly there, in the chapel of Our Lady where Lucy used to retire to pray, that Heaven manifested itself again.⁷⁰⁴

First of all let us quote from her letter of August 29, 1931, where the seer passes on to her bishop this message, which is of capital importance in the economy of the message of Fatima:

«My confessor orders me to inform Your Excellency of what took place a little while ago between the Good Lord and myself: as I was asking God for

the conversion of Russia, Spain and Portugal, it seemed to me that His Divine Majesty said to me: “You console Me a great deal by asking Me for the conversion of those poor nations. Ask it also of My Mother frequently, saying: *Sweet Heart of Mary, be the salvation of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the whole world. At other times say: By your pure and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, obtain for me the conversion of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the entire world.*”

«“*Make it known to My ministers that, given they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of My request, they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary.*”»⁷⁰⁵

Three years later, Sister Lucy explicitly mentioned the memorable letter written at Rianjo. Writing to Father Gonçalves on January 21, 1935, she said:

«... Regarding the matter of Russia, I think that it would please Our Lord very much if you worked to make the Holy Father comply with His wishes. *About three years ago (therefore around 1931) Our Lord was very displeased* because His request had not been attended to and I made this fact known to the bishop in a letter.»⁷⁰⁶

In 1936, when she wrote down the detailed account of the apparition of Tuy for Father Gonçalves, she made sure that in the same text she recalled the decisive revelation of August, 1931:

«Later on, by means of an interior communication, Our Lord complainingly said to me: ***“They did not want to heed My request. Like the King of France they will repent and do so, but it will be late. Russia will already have spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The Holy Father will have much to suffer.”***»⁷⁰⁷

Sister Lucy often returned to the mention of this terrible judgment by Our Lord, which was combined with a very firm but anguishing prophecy. She recalled it again in 1943, on the subject of the Spanish bishops. She mentioned it again when she spoke with Father Jongen in 1946.⁷⁰⁸ Finally, she cited these words of Our Lord once again, applying them to our present time.⁷⁰⁹

«MAKE IT KNOWN TO MY MINISTERS...»

Who is referred to in this terrible prophecy? Lucy's confessors? Bishop da Silva? Or the Holy Father? Fatima historians are careful not to broach the question and Father Alonso himself leaves us in doubt. We must, however, read and reread all the texts of Sister Lucy on this point. They are perfectly clear and leave no room for doubt.

1. *After the years 1930-1931, Sister Lucy never complains of any defect in the passing on of the message of Tuy.* Besides, we have seen that Father Gonçalves carried out his mission as intermediary perfectly well.

2. *Sister Lucy never writes that we must strive to see that Heaven's requests finally reach the Holy Father.* No, instead she writes: «We must work so that the Holy Father *realizes* the designs» of Our Lord (January 21, 1935). We must «insist» (May 18, 1936). These expressions presuppose that he has already been informed.

3. *Our Lord's words in August 1931 are themselves sufficiently explicit.* They unquestionably indicate that the fulfilment of the message is in question, not its transmission, which has already been done: «They did not want to heed My request...! Like the King of France they will repent and do it, but it will be late.» «Like the King of France»: in 1689, King Louis XIV had only to execute the desires of the Sacred Heart, not pass them on to someone else. The Reverend Father de la Chaise had already been explicitly designated for that purpose. Moreover, in Our Lord's words at Rianjo, it is the same people (designated sometimes by the indeterminate "they" or by the expression "My ministers") who «did not want» to heed His request, who «will repent», and who will finally «do it». Thus, it can concern only the Pope and the bishops, to whom it falls to fulfil the consecration requested.

But what is the precise meaning of this plural form? «Make it known to *My ministers*»? We can imagine that the Pope no doubt consulted or informed this or that prelate in his entourage about his decision, who encouraged him in his refusal. Does the formula also refer to Bishop da Silva, who had also refused to obey Heaven's requests by delaying the passing on of the message? Perhaps, but it is not certain.

More probably the plural is explained by the fact that, besides the person of the

reigning Pontiff, the prophecy also concerns his successors. In the same way, the requests of the Sacred Heart were addressed, in the person of Louis XIV, to all his successors on the throne of France.

IV. «THEY FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE KING OF FRANCE»

This is an explicit reference to the requests of the Sacred Heart given to Saint Margaret Mary in 1689. It explains the meaning and the implications of Our Lord's laconic words on the subject of Pope Pius XI and his successors. Once again, the message of Paray-le-Monial sheds tremendous light on the message of Fatima. In return, this episode in the Fatima message allows us to resolve a thorny historical question: the transmission of the message of the Sacred Heart to King Louis XIV.⁷¹⁰

«THE GREAT DESIGNS OF THE SACRED HEART» OVER FRANCE AND ITS KING

On June 17, 1689, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, which was already celebrated at the Visitation Monastery of Paray-le-Monial, Saint Margaret Mary spoke to Mother de Saumaise to have the message passed on to King Louis XIV.

After explaining what the Sacred Heart expected of the Visitation order, the saint continued:

«... But He does not want to stop there: He has even greater designs, which can only be executed by His Omnipotence, which can do everything It desires.

«He thus desires, it seems to me, to enter with pomp and magnificence into the houses of princes and kings, to be honoured there as much as He was outraged, despised and humiliated in His Passion; and He desires to receive as much pleasure at seeing the great ones of the earth bowing down and humiliated before Him as He felt bitterness at seeing Himself annihilated at their feet.

«And here are the words which I heard on this subject: “*Make it known to the eldest son of My Sacred Heart* – speaking of our King – that just as his temporal birth was obtained by devotion to the merits of My holy Infancy,

in the same way he will obtain his birth into grace and eternal glory *by the consecration* which he himself will make to My Adorable Heart, which wishes to triumph over his own, and through his efforts, triumph over the great ones of the earth as well. It wishes to reign in his palace, to be painted on his standards and engraved on his arms to make them victorious over his enemies, bringing these haughty and proud people to their knees before him, to make him triumphant over all the enemies of Holy Church.”»⁷¹¹

In another letter written on August 28 of the same year, the messenger of the Sacred Heart specified more clearly Heaven’s requests, and the incomparable promises attached to them:

«The eternal Father, wishing to repair for the bitterness and anguish which the Adorable Heart of His divine Son felt in the house of the princes of the earth during the humiliations and outrages of the Passion, wishes to establish His empire in the court of our great monarch, whom He wishes to use for the execution of this design that He wants to accomplish in this way: to have an edifice built containing the picture of this divine Heart, to receive there the consecration and homage of the king and the entire court. Moreover, this divine Heart wishes to become the protector and defender of his sacred person against all his enemies visible and invisible, to defend him against them, and assure his salvation by this means. Therefore, He has chosen him (the king) as His faithful friend to obtain the authorization of the Mass in His honour by the Holy Apostolic See, and all the other privileges which must accompany this devotion to this Sacred Heart, through which He wishes to dispense the treasures of His graces of sanctification and salvation, pouring out His blessings in abundance over all his enterprises. He will cause them to succeed for His glory, and give new success to his arms to make them triumph over his enemies. Happy will he be then if he learns to love this devotion, which will gain for him an eternal kingdom of honour and glory in this Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who will undertake to elevate him and make him great in Heaven before God His Father, as much as this great monarch will undertake to take away before men the insults and humiliations which this divine Heart suffered before them; this will be done by giving to Him and procuring for Him the honours, love and glory which He awaits from the king.

«But since God has chosen the Reverend Father de la Chaise for the execution of this design, through the power He has given him over the heart

of our great king, it therefore falls to him to make this plan succeed...»⁷¹²

The Sacred Heart added that the Jesuit Order had been specially chosen to spread the devotion to Him, and pass on His great designs to the king. If it fulfilled this mission, the Order would receive graces and blessings in return; implying that in the contrary case, it would be chastised.

THE REFUSAL AND THE EXEMPLARY CHASTISEMENT

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS DISSOLVED. The prophecy was fulfilled to the letter, and in striking fashion. It is almost certain that Father de la Chaise refused to pass on the message of the Sacred Heart to the king. Or in any case, he did not encourage the king to follow it. A terrible chastisement followed: the ruin of the most flourishing and powerful order at that time followed in less than a century. Suppressed in Portugal in 1759, in France in 1764, in Spain three years later, the Society of Jesus was finally dissolved by the Pope himself in 1773. Saint Alphonsus de Liguori wrote on the subject: «What can we do? Simply adore the judgments of God in silence, and remain calm...»⁷¹³

THE KING DETHRONED. As for King Louis XIV, who found out about the desires of the Sacred Heart through means other than the Jesuits, the year 1689 marked the turning point of his reign. In spite of all his ingenuity, and the incessant labours of his virtuous old age, in spite of his heroic patience in the face of the worst reversals, he did not succeed in decisively crushing «the haughty and proud heads» of his enemies. These “enemies” were the enemies of France, as well as the most perfidious adversaries of the Roman Church: Calvinist Holland remained unvanquished; the England of William the Orange, which later came under the Masonic Hanoverian dynasty, jealous of the glory and preponderance of France; and finally Protestant Prussia, this aggressor nation which continued to rise after 1701, for the misfortune of Europe.

The great king died piously in 1701, but isolated and already powerless to prevent the coming catastrophes. His kingdom, deprived of the increase of extraordinary graces and miraculous help of the Sacred Heart, was gravely menaced from without, and undermined from within by the frivolousness, deadly errors, cowardice and betrayals which soon brought about its ruin.

During the entire eighteenth century, our stupid, miserable “philosophers” and

encyclopaedists, seduced and subsidized by the Protestant and Masonic Counter-Church, prepared the great upheaval of the French Revolution through their satanic hatred against God, against Christ and against His Church, and their furious hatred against France and its king.

On June 17, 1789, exactly one century after this Feast of the Sacred Heart when Saint Margaret Mary, «following the movement given to her at the same instant», had written down the great designs of Heaven for the king, the Third Estate rose up and proclaimed itself a National Assembly. At that moment, it overthrew the fully legitimate monarchy of divine right. On January 21, 1793, France, ungrateful and rebellious to its God, dared to decapitate its Most Christian King.

Granted, the royal house of France had begun to fulfil the desires of the Sacred Heart through the Queen, Marie Leczinska, through her son the Great Dauphin, and especially through Madame Elizabeth and also through Louis XVI, although he was already a prisoner and deprived of his sovereignty. We will return to this point later.

In the meantime, however, it is the consideration of the divine chastisement which must hold our attention. Like the revelation of Paray-le-Monial in 1689, the revelation of August, 1931, to Sister Lucy is a key to the interpretation of our history. It is a terrible prophecy: by their lack of docility to Heaven's voice, the Sovereign Pontiffs today, like the Kings of France two centuries ago, will draw down «misfortune» upon themselves, and also upon the Church and on Christendom, which is assailed on every side by the unchained forces of the “adversary”.

Before going into the terrible consequences of the non-consecration of Russia, we must first of all answer a question: why was this consecration, which is so easy in itself, not done?

APPENDIX⁷¹⁴ - A SECOND ACCOUNT OF THE VISION OF TUY

In September of 1984, Father Martins introduced a previously unpublished account of the vision of Tuy in *Fatima e o Coração de Maria*. He writes: «*I found this copy taped to the machine and unsigned, among Lucy's letters*

addressed to Father Gonçalves, letters which Father Alonso had brought back to Madrid and which, thanks to God, were returned to Portugal.» On this copy Father Alonso had noted: «It is a manuscript Sister Lucy had in her journal.» Here is this text, probably written by Sister Lucy herself, in its entirety:

«Copy of the manuscript.

«The request for the consecration of Russia.

«11-6-29.⁷¹⁵ – I was in the chapel, alone with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, illumined only by the pale light of the (vigil) lamps, to make a holy hour from eleven o'clock to midnight, as was my custom.

«Without knowing how, I felt myself being enveloped in an intense light, and I saw upon the altar (I was very near it, kneeling in the middle, very near the communion rail) a Cross; on the upper part the face of a man and his body to the waist; before his breast a dove of more intense light; on the Cross Our Lord appearing as the crucified; under the right side of the Cross, Our Lady showing Her Immaculate Heart as at Fatima, and under the left side letters as it were of crystal-clear water flowing to the ground and forming the words: “Grace and Mercy”.

«I understood that it was the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity that was shown to me and I received enlightenment on this mystery which I am not permitted to describe.

«Our Lady said: “The moment has come in which God asks of the Holy Father to make, and to order that in union with him and at the same time, all the bishops of the world make, the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart”, promising to convert it because of this day of prayer and worldwide reparation.

«I gave an account of this revelation to the confessor, who was then the Reverend Father José Bernardo Gonçalves, a Jesuit. His Reverence asked me to write it down, which I did, giving the paper to His Reverence on June 13, 1930. Ave Maria!»⁷¹⁶

It would, of course, be very important for the critical history of Fatima, to be able to clarify when and on what occasion this account of the Tuy vision was written. Several indications drawn from internal criticism suggest, it seems to us,

the hypothesis that it was written before the more detailed text written by Sister Lucy for Father Gonçalves in May 1936.⁷¹⁷ Yet these particularities of the text may perhaps have another explanation, and do not absolutely exclude the hypothesis that it was written after 1936. We remain, in short, in a regrettable uncertainty, which only a further investigation with the seer herself can dispel. Thus it falls to those responsible for the critical edition of the documents on Fatima and the writings of Sister Lucy to settle this historical point in a decisive manner.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OSTPOLITIK OF POPE PIUS XI (1922 - 1931)

Why did Pope Pius XI not obey Heaven's requests at the very moment he learned of them, during 1930-1931? It is not hard to discover why. Would not the accomplishment of a solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia by the Pope and all the bishops presuppose a formal, doctrinal condemnation of Marxism-Leninism, and a firm, supremely independent policy on Bolshevik Russia?

Now, since 1917, following the western democracies, the Holy See had boldly set on a completely different course. It followed the policy of compromise and conciliation to an extent hardly imaginable. To understand later events, we must first retrace this little known history of the relations between the Vatican and Moscow. This policy of "opening to the East" was carried out resolutely for almost ten years, and was an integral part of the more general Vatican policy. It was surely the major obstacle to the fulfilment of the great design of mercy revealed at Tuy for the conversion of Russia and world peace.

I. THE VATICAN OSTPOLITIK IS LAUNCHED (1919-1925)

«A formal condemnation of the Marxist heresy (Henri Daniel-Rops pertinently remarks) had seemed to be due since the triumph of Communism in holy Russia and the manifest danger to the world from its propaganda.»⁷¹⁸ Correct. It was Saint Pius X who, after the evil law of separation of Church and State in France, did not hesitate but strongly condemned the masonic and socialist revolutions in Mexico and Portugal. Had he survived, he unquestionably would have condemned for all time and without delay, the perverse and diabolical *theoria* and *praxis* of Marxism-Leninism. Unfortunately, the holy Pope's successors decided to adopt a completely different policy.

*BENEDICT XV: THE VATICAN OPTS FOR THE WAY OF COMPROMISE
(1919-1922)*

After the First World War, there was frightful misery in all Central Europe. On several occasions, Pope Benedict XV appealed to the charity of the Catholic faithful to help these unfortunate peoples. On August 5, 1921, he launched a world appeal, this time specially in favour of Russia, where the atrocious famine we have described was then raging. In his letter *Le Notizie* to Cardinal Gasparri, he invited Christian and civilized peoples to send help to the starving populations right away.

To organize the relief mission of clothing and food, the Vatican began talks with Lenin's government. For instead of having to rely on American or Genevan associations, Benedict XV wanted the Vatican itself to handle the distribution of alms. At Benedict XV's death, negotiations continued between Cardinal Gasparri – who remained Secretary of State until December 1929 – and Vorovski, the Soviet delegate. On March 12, 1919, during the cruel persecution of the Orthodox which endangered the life of Patriarch Tikhon, Cardinal Gasparri sent a telegram of protest directly to Lenin.⁷¹⁹ The “People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs”, Chicherin, responded by a long document which appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano*.

Although the charitable intention of these frequent contacts appeared praiseworthy in itself, it had the disturbing disadvantage of favouring the foreign policy of the Kremlin, whose principal objective during the immediate post-war years was to obtain *de jure* recognition by the great powers. All public contacts with the Holy See, of whatever nature, were a precious trump card in the Kremlin's favour. The moral authority of the Sovereign Pontiff was necessarily engaged in all these diplomatic contacts. Would this not permit the Western democracies later on, without scruple or infamy, to commit the political crime of officially recognizing Lenin's government?

With consummate skill and cynicism, Chicherin, the Russian Foreign Minister, was able to milk these renewed relations with the Vatican for all they were worth. Alas, he was able to keep them going and make them the object of constant blackmail for almost ten years!

THE FIRST MEASURES OF THE RUSSIAN POLICY OF POPE PIUS XI

In effect, Pope Pius XI, who succeeded Benedict XV on February 6, 1922, followed the policy sketched by his predecessor, but systematically and even

more boldly.

Since April of 1918, when he had been sent to Poland as Apostolic Visitor, before becoming in short order Nuncio to Warsaw, as well as being entrusted with relations with Soviet Russia, Archbishop Ratti had been involved in talks with Moscow. On April 19, 1919, the Catholic Archbishop of Mohilev, Msgr. Edouard de Ropp, had been incarcerated. «Only in November, due to negotiations between the apostolic nuncio and the foreign commissar Chicherin, was he released and exiled to Poland.»⁷²⁰

THE RELIEF MISSION TO THE FAMINE VICTIMS. As soon as he was elected, Pope Pius XI decided to send a pontifical mission to Bolshevik Russia to relieve the famine victims:

«Immediately after his coronation, the Sovereign Pontiff called Father Edmond Walsh, S.J., a member of the American Relief Association, to study with him the best means of coming to the aid of the Russian people. Father Walsh opened negotiations with the American mission, and it was agreed that the pontifical mission would cooperate with it.»⁷²¹

Before that could happen, the necessary visas and authorizations had to be obtained from Moscow.

THE GENOA CONFERENCE (APRIL - MAY 1922)

Organized especially to limit the just demands of Poincaré's France, the international conference of Genoa was called to end the diplomatic isolation of Germany and Russia, and to contribute to their economic recovery. This, claimed the Anglo-Americans supported by Judeo-Masonry and the international left, was the indispensable condition for peace. For the first time the Bolsheviks were admitted to the talks. Chicherin defended their interests there.

On April 7, three days before the conference opened, the Pope published a letter addressed to Msgr. Signori, Archbishop of Genoa, in which he expressed the immense hope to be placed in this «international peace conference». The victors were discreetly asked to make «some sacrifices on the altar of the common good». Especially, the Pope continued, «because international hatreds, a sad legacy of the war, turn to the disadvantage of the victorious peoples themselves

and prepare a fearful future for us all; for it must not be forgotten that the best guarantee of tranquillity is not a forest of bayonets *but mutual trust and friendship.*»⁷²²

On April 16, during the Germano-Russian accord of Rappalo, Germany officially recognized the Bolshevik government. This was an initial success which Chicherin tried to reinforce with others, throughout the conference.

The Vatican, for its part, hoped for a great deal from the Soviets. The fall of the Czar meant the end of the monopoly of Orthodoxy, which no longer enjoyed any exclusive privilege. If a concordat or at least a *modus vivendi* could be signed with Lenin, what a wonderful field of action for our Catholic missions! Such was the Pope's thinking at the beginning of 1922. Full of optimism, as though more could be hoped for from Lenin than from Nicholas II! This was the era when the young Italian "Christian Democracy" of Don Sturzo, whom the Pope greatly esteemed although he had been a furious adversary of the policy of Saint Pius X, openly advocated coming to an understanding with Bolshevik Russia.

Towards Chicherin's Russian delegation, the Vatican multiplied its advances: Msgr. Sincero, Msgr. Pizzardo, substitute for the Secretary of State, and Archbishop Signori all tried their hand at it. The latter even caused some scandal: on April 22, during an official dinner on the Italian warship *Dante Alighieri*, the stupefying scene was witnessed of Archbishop Signori exchanging smiles and pleasantries with the Soviet representative, who was sitting across from him at the table. The two exchanged autographed photographs.

On April 29, the Pope intervened once again in favour of the Genoa conference. He continued, optimistically, to express his hopes for the success of the conference, for the peace and progress of all nations, especially Russia, which he referred to in these terms:

«These unfortunate populations of Eastern Europe, already isolated by war, internal conflicts and religious persecution, are presently decimated by famine and disease, even though they possess such great natural resources in their territories and could be powerful elements of social restoration. Although these peoples have long been separated from Our communion by unfortunate past events, We hope that Our word of compassion and consolation, as well as those of Our late predecessor, may reach them, as well as the ardent desire of Our paternal heart to see them enjoying with Us

the same benefits of “unity and peace” expressed by common participation in the sacred Mysteries.»⁷²³

No mention is made of the cursed revolution, or of inhuman and satanic Bolshevism.

Meanwhile, on May 14, the official envoy of the Vatican, Msgr. Pizzardo, brought the members of the Genoa conference a memorandum in which the Pope proposed to the nations *official recognition of the Bolshevik government* on the sole condition that it promise to grant in Russia «respect for consciences, freedom of worship, and safeguard the goods of the Church» for all religious confessions, whatever they might be.⁷²⁴

Msgr. Pizzardo was also entrusted by the Pope with negotiations with the Soviets on three important points:

1. He asked that liberty be granted to the Patriarch Tikhon, who had just been interned at the monastery of Donskoi.
2. He requested that passports be obtained for the eleven envoys of the pontifical relief mission for the famine victims.
3. Finally, the Pope disclosed that he was disposed to *ransom* from the government of Lenin the icons and sacred vessels whose confiscation was called for by the recent decree of February 26, 1922.

On May 17, Chicherin acknowledged receipt of Msgr. Pizzardo's letter, indicating that the propositions would be passed on to Moscow. On June 7, Cardinal Gasparri made the same request, sending a telegram addressed directly to Lenin.⁷²⁵

Out of these three requests, Moscow responded only to the second one, concerning the relief mission for the famine victims. Once more a formal condition had been laid down, which the Vatican accepted: all manifestation of Christian faith and all apostolates were forbidden to the religious of the relief mission. They could celebrate Mass only behind closed doors. It was not even permitted to distribute with the food some images of the Most Holy Virgin, as Father Walsh desired.

Meanwhile, the persecution continued more horribly than ever, since during the

year 1922 alone more than 800 Catholic and Orthodox priests, brothers and nuns were shot in Russia.⁷²⁶

THE REACTION OF THE ÉMIGRÉS. The Vatican policy stirred up the strongest emotions among those Russians who had emigrated to the West. Their “National Committee” residing in Paris published an “Open Letter to the Pope”. The Russian refugees wrote:

«The newspapers are forecasting the conclusion of a concordat between the Holy See and the Bolsheviks. It matters little whether the news is true or not, for the form of the agreement with the Bolsheviks can change nothing in our relations with them. *It is the very fact of the existence of these relations which afflicts us.*»⁷²⁷

The response from highly placed Vatican officials was that the Vatican wished only to aid the famine victims, and save innocent victims from their executioners... Nevertheless, the declarations of the press were well founded. The Vatican did indeed hope to obtain a *modus vivendi* from the Soviets.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE RELIEF MISSION. On July 10, 1922, the Pope published the apostolic letter *Annus fere*, ordering a general collection in favour of the starving Russian people. No reference was made there to the communist regime and the atrocious persecutions. There was question only of «the extreme misery of the Russian people, who were decimated by disease and famine, victims of the greatest calamity in history», and «the immensity of the scourge to be warded off.»⁷²⁸

On July 24, the eleven envoys of the Holy See left Rome, after having attended the Pope’s Mass in his private chapel, and after receiving his blessing. Arriving in Russia at the end of September, Father Walsh and his collaborators began their difficult mission, harassed continually by the local authorities. With admirable patience and dedication, they were nevertheless able to multiply their relief centres, which in August, 1924 were daily feeding 158,000 of these unfortunates. It was a magnificent work in its own sphere, but Father Walsh realized very quickly that it was in vain, and in the final analysis mostly profited the Bolshevik government.

There, on the spot, «Father Walsh... came to see that a longer sojourn of the Papal Mission offered little or no hope of strengthening the tenuous hold of

the Catholic Church in Russia, but he also realized that there were advantages to be gained by a delayed departure. He was well aware of the fact that the ultimate purpose of the Soviet Government in asking the Mission to stay on and continue its work, was to obtain from the Vatican *de facto* recognition of its existence, something he had determined never to encourage or to countenance. Moscow knew this and never missed an opportunity to make things awkward for him.»⁷²⁹

THE FIRST MISSION OF FATHER D'HERBIGNY (SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1922)

Father d'Herbigny had become the specialist for Russian affairs within the Society of Jesus. His biographer writes: «It was a fatal mistake that he became an advisor and informant of the Pope». Thus from the very first weeks of the new Pontificate, Father d'Herbigny became «one of the advisors and collaborators of Pius XI.»⁷³⁰

In September, 1922, an initial project of a visit to Moscow by Father d'Herbigny was approved by the Pope. A rather curious project, it has to be admitted: Some socialists had obtained permission to be present at the trial of some Russian socialist leaders, and «as the trial of the Orthodox Patriarch Tikhon was announced, why couldn't an ecclesiastical witness be present at the trial, Pius XI wondered.»⁷³¹

At the same time, the radical socialist Edouard Herriot, who made himself at the time the apostle of Russian Bolshevism and actively worked for French recognition of the regime, was invited to Moscow by Chicherin, who arranged the trip.⁷³² And in fact on his return in November 1922, Herriot published *La Russie nouvelle*, a long, three hundred page plea, where, after a series of wildly enthusiastic praises of the regime, the conclusion was automatic: it was urgent that «the Russian republic be reconciled with the French republic».⁷³³

Well, who would have believed it? It was agreed that Father d'Herbigny would accompany Herriot on his visit to Moscow. Father Renaud acted as go-between, and the accord was concluded. Herriot consented and a rendezvous was set. The religious service of the Quai d'Orsay wrote a memorandum drawn up for the intentions of the Soviet services: «For a vote in parliament on recognition of the Soviets, it is important to gain the votes of the right; the Soviets therefore ought

to grant what the Jesuit d’Herbigny asks for.»⁷³⁴

THE D’HERBIGNY-CHICHERIN INTERVIEW. In the end, the project of a voyage with Herriot did not come to pass, and Father d’Herbigny left for Berlin on September 22, accompanied by a fellow Jesuit, Father Cadet. The visas of the two Jesuits were to be granted by the Russian embassy at Berlin, through the mediation of the French embassy. «One day, the Soviet embassy informed Father d’Herbigny that *Chicherin* “wanted to see” this “enterprising Jesuit”.» After long conversations and interminable questions from the embassy personnel, d’Herbigny, who had come alone, spoke with the Soviet minister. But he himself tells us nothing about this astonishing interview.

The passports were to be granted at Riga. After arriving on October 8, Father d’Herbigny went to the Russian delegation: «“Are you going to Moscow for the Patriarch’s trial?” “Yes.” “And for no other reason?” “No.” “Then your journey is useless because the supreme presidium has just decided that this patriarch will not be tried.”»⁷³⁵

The mission was terminated. Father d’Herbigny liked to think of it as a complete success, because, as he wrote later on, it had «spared the Patriarch all the consequences in which this trial would have resulted. Above all, it spared the government and in a sense, the people of Russia, from the responsibility, the infamous crime.»⁷³⁶ This was going to a great deal of trouble to save Lenin from committing an infamous crime, at the very moment when he was cynically organizing the massacre of Ukrainians on a grand scale. In this whole affair Rome treated the bloody, satanic butchers from Moscow with respect and deference.⁷³⁷

THE PONTIFICAL ORIENTAL INSTITUTE. Meanwhile Father d’Herbigny received a telegram: the Holy Father was appointing him president of the Pontifical Oriental Institute at Rome to replace Dom Schuster, the Benedictine Abbot of St.-Paul’s-Outside-the-Walls, the future Cardinal who later became the friend of Pope Pius XII. Very farsighted and firmly anti-communist, he was the first later on to publish the secret of Fatima. What a shame that he was removed from all responsibility concerning Russian affairs from the beginning of the pontificate!⁷³⁸

On December 11, 1922, and once more in his inaugural encyclical, *Ubi arcano Dei*, on December 25, the Pope insisted on the importance of the pontifical work

in favour of Russia: his intervention at the Genoa conference and the sending of the pontifical relief mission for the famine victims.⁷³⁹

THE DOCTRINE OF OSTPOLITIK

The Soviet Tyranny and Russia's Misfortune. Such was the title of a book that Father d'Herbigny published in February of 1923. The president of the Pontifical Oriental Institute was not satisfied with describing at length, and in moving terms, the misery of the Russian people. His work also indicated the broad lines of a policy with regard to the Soviets, a policy undoubtedly adopted by Pope Pius XI himself, who had full confidence in his advisor.

Granted, Father d'Herbigny first of all condemns in vigorous terms the bloody tyranny of the men in power, of Lenin, «this cold and implacable calculator», who deliberately caused terror to reign as an essential phase of revolutionary tactics. He also describes the frightful misfortune of the oppressed people: massacres, persecutions, famines.

THE CAUSES OF THE EVIL. Having thus evoked the facts, d'Herbigny comes to pose the decisive question: «How can such a violent state last?» His response serves as the title of a chapter: «Three causes: dictatorships, secret societies, spiritism.» «The Russian people have almost always been governed by a dictatorship.» Then he repeats the old myth that has pacified the conscience of the West since 1917: the Bolshevik tyrants are only continuing in the footsteps of the Czars. The Czars were also responsible for the development of the secret societies. Then he begins bringing up haphazardly mediums, spiritists, turning tables, occultists and finally Rasputin. At length he comes to the Bolsheviks, whose seizure of power is thus easily understood.

On the ravages effected by idealistic, revolutionary German philosophy, on the tenacious hatred of Judeo-Masonry for a traditional, paternalistic and Christian monarchical power, our Jesuit is completely silent.

THE INEVITABLE FAILURE OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION. In any case, our author insists, without indicating what period of time he is talking about – 1918 or 1922? – the Russian people are absolutely powerless to shake off the new yoke of the tyrants in the Kremlin. It is a fact: the White insurrection did fail. Was it because they were shamefully abandoned by the West? No. Our

author explains four reasons for this defeat, of a completely different order:

«Must this defeat be attributed to the bad choice of leaders or their incompetence? The lack of discipline or cruelty of their troops? The lack of precision of a program that did not guarantee land to the peasants? The popular fear of reprisals after a Czarist restoration?

«All these reasons have been given by different Russian émigrés, according to their different antipathies. *There is some validity to all of them, especially the last two.*

«However, General Kornilov, Admiral Kolchak, Generals Denikin and Wrangel do not seem inferior to the leaders who fought them. *In pillaging and the execution of revenge, the White troops did not always equal, or at least visibly surpass the Red troops...*»⁷⁴⁰

Anyone who reads Solzhenitsyn can easily judge the validity of the reasons given above. They all demonstrate a curious bias in favour of the Reds, whose victory, we are told, seemed preferable to the Russian people rather than the Whites. Such reasoning ignores the force and extent of the spontaneous Counter-Revolution that followed immediately after the October Revolution. Solzhenitsyn writes:

«In Russia, all the forces which had been fighting each other up to that point – the supporters of the existing state, including the Cadets and socialists of the right – *made a common front against communism*. Without joining each other's ranks or acting together, the people manifested their opposition at every level by thousands of peasants' uprisings and dozens of workers' riots. To constitute the Red Army it was necessary to shoot tens of thousands of resisters.

«But this national resistance to communism *was not supported by the Western powers*. Fantastic fables were rampant throughout the West, and "progressive" public opinion warmly greeted the beginning of the communist regime, in spite of the Cambodian-style massacre perpetrated in all thirty provinces of Russia in 1921... *The Western powers bent over backwards to prop up the economy of the Soviet regime, which without this aid could not have survived*. While six million people died of hunger in Ukraine and Kuban, Europe danced.

«... The fatal errors of the West in its attitude towards communism began in 1918, when the Western governments were not able to see the mortal danger it represented for them.»⁷⁴¹

Not only did they not perceive the danger, but blinded by their laicizing and revolutionary ideology, they rejoiced heartily over the fall of the Czar. As Emmanuel Malinski observes:

«The Allied press was unanimous. Not a single voice was raised in defence of him who had been our faithful ally right up until death. According to Princess Paley, Lloyd George cried out loud: “One of England’s war aims has been attained.” The Allies enthusiastically applauded this new state of affairs.

«In 1793, France had against it, if not the peoples, at least the governments of all of Europe, while Russia in 1917 had the democracies of the entire world to assist it, second it, and help it to go on to victory, wrote M. Vandervelde in 1919. The latter was one of those who had been sent by the Allies to Russia, to bring the revolution the salvation of the western democracies.

«They were ecstatic over this “bloodless” revolution.»⁷⁴²

Alas, it was not long before blood began to flow. And the error, or rather the criminal complicity of the West, is responsible in the highest degree for this horrible genocide. What, then, should have been done?

«It was necessary to nip in the bud this Bolshevik revolution, the shame of humanity, hatched by Jewish capitalism and transported into Russia by the German high command. *The West hastened to recognize it, assist it, and help it in every way to triumph over Russia which had risen up against it.*»⁷⁴³

AT THE SOURCES OF THE VATICAN OSTPOLITIK. Instead of denouncing this collusion of liberal and plutocratic democracy with the popular Bolshevik democracy – both were united in fidelity to the ideology and myths of 1789 or 1793, which are one and the same – the Holy See more or less consciously calculated its attitude towards the Soviets after the attitude of the democracies. Since the death of Saint Pius X it wished to be reconciled with the democracies

at any price.

Hence, the Vatican expert strives to absolve the democracies from all responsibility in the frightful Russian tragedy. To realize that, we need only read the long, clumsy plea found in Chapter Six: «Would a foreign intervention succeed?» Using sophisticated arguments, the author reaches the desired conclusion: «Thus it was great wisdom not to have sent in French and English arms to overthrow Bolshevism.»⁷⁴⁴ The West is absolved of its criminal complicity which was, alas, undeniable. And the conclusion necessarily follows...

THE ESTABLISHED POWER MUST BE ACCEPTED. This in fact is the principle which guided Vatican diplomacy at the time, as it guided the diplomacy of all the great powers. Lenin is the *de facto* power who must be dealt with. Besides, the Vatican “expert” tells us, Lenin represents the lesser evil for Russia:

«As long as Lenin’s government, in the midst of a population exhausted by famine and misery, can feed its Red soldiers, as long as it appears to them the only one capable of saving them in the midst of universal disaster, its authority – however feeble – will remain the only power among other forces which are growing increasingly impotent.

«A widespread famine would perhaps bring about its ruin. But if it disappeared, what would follow? Would it not be radical anarchy? Party rivalries and individual hatred between men would be given free expression. Is not the small group of declared monarchists bitterly divided already over vitally important problems, and already over the choice of a claimant to the throne? Five or six candidates have their supporters, and others will rise up.»⁷⁴⁵

ONE SOLE OBJECTIVE: TO OBTAIN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. Now that all hope, all desire for a political solution which would finally deliver Russia from Bolshevism is resolutely excluded, what remains for the resistance?

«Bolshevism has not given way, and will not give way except before one type of resistance: if *moral forces* are raised up against it.» These moral forces are Christianity, the moral forces of the Church, the only solid rampart facing Bolshevism. How are they to be exercised? By «the moral force of its example and its charity.»⁷⁴⁶ Charity, understanding, and open-mindedness on the Church’s part are capable of gradually softening the cruelty of the Kremlin

tyrants. Besides, the situation must necessarily evolve:

«The powerlessness of anti-Bolshevik efforts is due to historical, geographic and social causes. The latter will surely evolve and are already being modified. But until this evolution, which must be psychological, moral, and religious besides being economic, the Soviets will retain their power.»⁷⁴⁷

Therefore, our Vatican “expert” continues, only one thing matters: to obtain freedom of action in Russia. If Lenin grants it, the envoys of the Holy See will be able to perform wonderful apostolic work over there. Let us therefore accept the Bolshevik regime. If in return it grants us religious liberty, gradually we will reconquer all of Russia for the Church through this toehold. «The individual return (of Russia) to the integral unity of the universal Church will not be accomplished by politics, but by virtue and supernatural means.»⁷⁴⁸

WONDERFUL PROJECTS FOR THE APOSTOLATE. Russia then is to be converted, without any fear of Lenin, and even counting on the benevolent protection of Mr. Chicherin, his foreign minister. Are we in full-scale utopia? Yet this is the conclusion of the whole work:

«This work, which is impossible to men, will be accomplished by the Holy Spirit when praying souls ask it of Him.

«Let us ask God to raise up souls with heroic charity and devotion in the entire country, to save the bodies and souls of this immense land of Russia, which stretches from Europe to Siberia. Nurses, hospital personnel, teachers, contemplatives, all people of good will, all communities can find a place. Rarely has an opportunity for a more beautiful collaboration in the work of Christ been offered to the world. Will protestants of every denomination eclipse our zeal?

«The Holy See can find a way to employ all individual and collective aptitudes. They must agree to accept direction, and their sacrifices will quickly become fruitful on Russian soil. The Christian spirit, which survives in the pious and touching faith found among the masses, would rapidly raise up helpers there and vocations of every sort.

«Let us sow, therefore, in the souls of Russians. The harvests of the future

will spring up from these seeds. After the famine – a famine of bread and of truth as well – Russia, which once furnished wheat to Europe, will become fruitful once more. In the spiritual order as well.»⁷⁴⁹

While the Vatican expert was lulling the West to sleep with his chimerical projects, over in Russia the persecution was growing more cruel.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF 1923: MOSCOW'S HORRIBLE BLACKMAIL

During January of 1923, the Holy See learned of a demand of certain communist circles: «They demanded that a high-placed member of the Catholic hierarchy be put to death next Holy Thursday.»⁷⁵⁰ On March 2, 1923, Msgr. Cieplak, apostolic administrator of the diocese of Mohilev, his vicar general Msgr. Budkiewicz, thirteen other priests and a lay person were arrested. They were transferred to Moscow, and in derision led across the city in an uncovered truck. From March 21-25, they appeared before the revolutionary tribunal. The two prelates were sentenced to death. The others were given prison sentences of three to ten years.

The Vatican was informed. The Kremlin promised their release if official diplomatic relations were established between the Vatican and Moscow. Thus Chicherin's objective was always the same: if the Vatican recognized *de jure* Lenin's government, all of Europe would soon follow its example. Nevertheless, Rome could not accept the offer since no great power, with the exception of Germany, had dared to do so. Moscow executed the sentence.

On Holy Thursday of 1923, Msgr. Budkiewicz was martyred with frightful cruelty. Brutally pushed across a dark corridor, he fell and broke his leg. Father Walsh, superior of the relief mission for the hungry, waited not far away all through Holy Thursday: the authorities had been cynical enough to promise that he would be told in advance about the torture hour, so that he might assist his confrere.

Stripped of his clothes and no longer able to walk, the martyr was dragged by the ears all the way to the detachment of guards. One of his ears had been severed. In the gaping hole, he was given a revolver shot. Father Walsh, who was constantly requesting over the phone if he could finally come, heard the shot ring out among shouts, drunken singing and bursts of laughter. So that no relics

would remain, the martyr's body was burned and his ashes dispersed.

And «this was the signal for a series of attacks against the hierarchy, clergy and laity, many of whom were sent to the icy prisons of Solowki on the Black Sea, where a concentration camp was specially assigned for Christians; others died in prison, some of them reduced to madness by the torments they had endured.»⁷⁵¹

FATHER WALSH ACCUSED OF INTRANSIGENCE. The American relief mission for the famine victims had left the USSR. Only the Holy See's mission remained, and the Bolshevik government requested its continuation. Father Walsh, who was still in Russia, was against it. But at Rome the Soviet representative, Jordanski, continued to multiply his promises, accusing Father Walsh of creating obstacles to a good understanding: he was too brusque and understood neither the new regime nor the Slavic spirit. Jordanski asked for his replacement. Rome remonstrated with the courageous missionary: the authorities «wondered if it might not be preferable, in view of the results hoped for, if the Father moderated his style of dealing with the Russian authorities.»⁷⁵²

THE CONSISTORIAL ALLOCUTION OF MAY 23, 1923

During an allocution to the Consistory of Cardinals, the Pope made known his decision. After mentioning the admirable work of the pontifical mission, «to honour them», Pius XI cited the names of the «illustrious prelates and other members of the clergy» who had recently been arrested, one of whom had been «cruelly put to death».

The Pope continued, revealing the nature of the talks which had taken place between Rome and Moscow during the trial:

«At first these facts took place without our knowledge, and then we were neither consulted nor even given a hearing when we asked that these ecclesiastics depending on our sacred authority be *sent before our tribunal*, with the evidence establishing their eventual guilt; and at the same time we made a solemn commitment to *judge their case* in all justice.»

Had Rome taken the word of the Red persecutors, as though they were the most honest, most legitimate of political authorities, and agreed to make these confessors of the faith stand trial simply on the denunciation of Moscow? It is

inconceivable. A little further on, the Pope pronounced this other stupefying sentence, a real insult to the courageous and holy martyrs: «*Whatever might be the significance and foundation of the other accusations* against Msgr. Cieplak and his companions in suffering...», Pius XI continued, the sorrow that we endure in thinking about their lot «is mitigated in a wonderful manner». «This balm» is the thought that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.

As for the mission of aid to the famine victims, it was to continue:

«All these events, whatever they might be, will not stop us (must it be added?) in the works of mercy and charity which have already been undertaken... in view of relieving such frightful miseries. We will persevere as long as there is a need for help and as long as we have resources to distribute... Thus shall we demonstrate the pains we are taking to remain at peace with everybody.» While maintaining the rights of God and the Church, of course, the Pope declared that he was «disposed to the extent they are permitted, to make all concessions necessary to obtain a more favourable regime for the Church everywhere, and to restore harmony to the minds of men at the same time.»⁷⁵³

Thus the negotiations continued «for the appointment of an apostolic delegate at Moscow, who turned out to be the Jesuit Father, Giulio Roj, a member of the pontifical relief commission.»⁷⁵⁴ All to the greatest possible satisfaction of Chicherin, who was triumphant on all points.

On November 12, 1923, in the encyclical *Ecclesiam Dei*, commemorating the third centenary of the death of Saint Josaphat,⁷⁵⁵ the Pope took up the same themes once more. The persecutions in Russia were always mentioned with the same discretion, without ever including the least condemnation of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism: «In addition, here and there (sic), Christians and even priests and bishops were tracked down to be imprisoned and even massacred. A very sweet consolation renders these evils less painful for us...⁷⁵⁶», etc.

WOULD ROME WAKE UP TO THE TRUTH ABOUT BOLSHEVIK RUSSIA?

Father Walsh, who had been called on to justify his attitudes, responded at length to the Secretariat of State. He wrote:

«It is not strange that they find my insistence on justice and the rights of religion irksome. I beg to point out to the Holy See that such a result is practically inevitable. It is not necessarily the person who becomes thus *non grata* but the facts, the injustice and savagery which are in themselves a continual reproach... I regret to be obliged to communicate to Your Eminence⁷⁵⁷ information of a disturbing nature.»

Under constant surveillance by the police, paralyzed in his charitable action by the administration's double-dealing, Father Walsh was disgusted by the cynicism of the Soviets, who sought only to obtain the maximum of food and other materials, which they kept for their own profit. In his memorandum to Cardinal Gasparri he wrote:

«Those of us who know the executions, imprisonments, exiling, confiscations and other savage manifestations of class hatred and revenge that have been going on in Russia, know and beg to inform you that our work is impossible under such conditions. If, consequently, I cannot obtain a definite written agreement of a tolerable nature, I see no alternative but immediate and dignified withdrawal of the Relief Mission.»⁷⁵⁸

The Vatican was slow to understand, and it was only at the end of September 1924 that the pontifical mission left Bolshevik Russia.

In a long allocution to the Consistory on December 18, 1924, the Pope briefly mentioned the event. After having congratulated the members of the mission, for the first time Pius XI pronounced a warning against communism:

«Let nobody, however, be mistaken about the nature of the relief which We have organized in favour of the Russian people, and think that in some way We have favoured a method of government: on the contrary, We are far from approving of it; and after having devoted Our energies, for so long and with such care, to relieving the terrible and innumerable misfortunes of this people, We believe it Our duty, by virtue of the universal paternity which God Himself has conferred upon Us, to speak to all peoples and in the first place to heads of governments, with a warning and an insistent exhortation in the name of the Lord: may all those who are solicitous for the holiness of the family and human dignity, join forces to preserve themselves and their fellow citizens from the very grave and very real menace of socialism and communism, without however neglecting the obligation incumbent upon

them to occupy themselves in improving the condition of workers, and all the lower classes in general.»⁷⁵⁹

That was all. This protest, which was addressed to the Cardinals and which was not destined to have great repercussions, was in no sense a firm and solemn doctrinal condemnation.⁷⁶⁰ That was still another thirteen years in coming.

During this same year, 1924, Chicherin had enjoyed dazzling diplomatic successes, to which the conciliatory attitude of the Vatican had surely contributed: England, Italy, Norway, Austria, Greece, Sweden, China, Denmark, Mexico, and France on October 28, all recognized *de jure* the triumvirate government of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev.

Would the Vatican finally understand that its conciliatory policy towards the Bolsheviks had resulted in a crushing failure, that it was not only illusory and vain, but disastrous for the Church and Christendom? Alas, no! For Moscow cleverly made new advances, to which the Vatican hastened to respond.

II. THE MOSCOW-PARIS-ROME TRIANGLE (1925-1927)

FATHER D'HERBIGNY AT THE RED COUNCIL OF MOSCOW

In June of 1925, the Pope had created a new pontifical commission *Pro Russia*, attached to the Sacred Congregation of Rites and Oriental Affairs. It was entrusted to Father d'Herbigny, whose influence with the Pope increased. The Pope continued to give him long and frequent audiences.

At the beginning of October, 1925, there was to take place at Moscow «a Red, antipatriarchal orthodox council». Actually it was a solemn meeting of «the living Soviet and revolutionary Church», founded by Bishop Antonin in 1922, in opposition to the Patriarch Tikhon. It was, of course, the docile instrument of the Bolshevik regime, without any serious support from the population.⁷⁶¹ Now it so happened that Moscow desired a representative of the French clergy to be present at this “Red Council”. This curious invitation – sent by whom if not Chicherin himself? – arrived on the desk of Msgr. Chaptal, the auxiliary Bishop of Paris, who was then enamoured of ecumenism. He immediately passed it on to his friend Father d'Herbigny, then visiting Paris, who was enthusiastic about the idea.

Father d'Herbigny immediately informed the Pope that he desired to be present at the meeting. A telegram from Cardinali Gasparri informed him that the Holy Father supported the project. On September 24, after returning to Rome, d'Herbigny was received in audience by the Pope, who requested him «to do everything possible to get to Moscow on time to be present at this council.»⁷⁶²

D'Herbigny returned to Paris and presented himself at the Soviet embassy. A visa was granted for sixteen days in Moscow. Mr. Aussem, Consul-General of the USSR at Paris, declared to him:

«Just as we had the new economic policy (the NEP), we now practise a new religious policy. We have observed that the majority of the Russian people are closely attached to religious ideas; we have decided to cease the direct struggle against these tendencies provided they do not serve as a cover for political agitation...»⁷⁶³

How could the Vatican expert give the slightest credence to such a gross lie? That remains an enigma for us. It was precisely in the year 1925 that Stalin founded "The Association of Militant Atheists".⁷⁶⁴

Objectively considered, it seems as though Chicherin had decided to use the hapless Father d'Herbigny once again. An NKVD agent could not have done better work for Moscow's interests. What were these interests at the time? It is certain that all diplomatic relations which delayed or prevented a solemn condemnation of communism by the Pope singularly favoured the revolutionary activities of the Kremlin everywhere in the world, and facilitated its foreign policy. If the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* had appeared fifteen years earlier, it would have been ten times more effective than when it appeared in 1937.

Moreover, from 1925 to 1927, as we will see, all exchanges between Moscow and Rome went through the French government. The name of the game was clear. By obtaining from Stalin advantages which the Pope judged to be of decisive importance for his projects for the apostolate in Russia, the French government, and more precisely the Quai d'Orsay, acquired valuable rights to obtain from Rome their part of the bargain: the condemnation of *Action Française*, whose increasing influence was threatening the socialist and Masonic republic, especially since its combat against laicism and the anti-religious laws of the left-wing Cartel had caused the elite of the clergy to rally to it, along with the majority of the Cardinals and Archbishops of France.

Thus the Quai d'Orsay applied itself to procuring the greatest possible success for the missions of Father d'Herbigny in Russia.⁷⁶⁵

«At the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially at the section for worship directed by Mr. Canet, Father d'Herbigny had been promised that the French Ambassador, Mr. Herbette, would be informed, and it would be recommended that he give the Jesuit maximum assistance, but it was not possible to predict the personal reactions of this ambassador, whose political opinions (and especially his wife's) were fairly left-wing. He tended to be anticlerical and hardly favourable to the Jesuits. In fact, the relations between the ambassador, his wife, and Father d'Herbigny were very cordial.»⁷⁶⁶

Father d'Herbigny arrived at Moscow on October 4. Here is his own description of the proceedings:

«When I present myself to the location of the council before an audience of about six hundred people, I am given a welcome; they have me step up on the platform. The presiding Metropolitan greets this ecclesiastic who has come from Paris. I thank him and since they have invited me to speak, I manage to get the floor without difficulty, but only at the end of the session, after hearing the scheduled orators...⁷⁶⁷

«At the embassy (of France in Moscow) where they have been advised by the Quai d'Orsay, they are increasingly deferential. I am invited there several times, notably with Mrs. Herriot, arriving from China and Japan... Since I thanked her for Mr. Herriot's having agreed to introduce me to Moscow for the trial of Patriarch Tikhon, she insisted on inviting me: "You must come and see Edouard; he will be very happy to meet you this time, which he was not able to do before."»⁷⁶⁸

After a brief stay in Paris, Father d'Herbigny went to Rome where he described his trip to Pope Pius XI. «His Holiness wished to have as many details as possible. Nothing seemed useless or superfluous to him.» Father d'Herbigny had had a very favourable impression of the "Red Council". He had heard there numerous sincere testimonies and even «a famous contradictory conference between the atheistic Minister of Education and the Metropolitan Wedenski, whose incisive eloquence obtained a real triumph.» All these things, which tended to demonstrate a real religious liberty in the USSR, were reported to the

Pope and published in the *Études* of December 20, 1925, contributing to improving the USSR's image in the eyes of the intelligentsia.

The operation had succeeded. For everybody. For Moscow, for Paris, and for Rome, which was lulled to sleep by its sweet illusions. Father d'Herbigny convinced the Holy Father of the absolute necessity of consecrating two or three bishops who could reorganize religious life in Russia.

1926: THE GREAT YEAR OF THE APOSTOLATE IN RUSSIA: AND THE SECOND VOYAGE TO THE USSR (APRIL 1 - MAY 23, 1926)

«On February 11, the anniversary of his election as Sovereign Pontiff, no doubt following Father d'Herbigny's notes, Pius XI had a divine inspiration: Reverend Father d'Herbigny must be consecrated bishop so that he might be sent once more to the USSR to consecrate others.»⁷⁶⁹ Father d'Herbigny, who had been informed the night before, was granted another audience, and got the Pope to accept the plan he had elaborated:

«Most Holy Father, it is at Paris that I must ask for this second visa, like the first one, without involving Rome in any way... I must get the approval of the French government by telling it that I am charged with bringing Father Neveu in Moscow the order to be consecrated bishop.»⁷⁷⁰

The Pope regretted not being able to perform the consecration himself, but it was agreed that it would be done secretly, during the voyage itself, by Archbishop Pacelli, the nuncio at Berlin.

Everything went very quickly, so quickly that by April 1, Bishop d'Herbigny was at Moscow. It must be said that «the French government agreed to facilitate everything. The large trunk containing all the instruments necessary for four or five episcopal consecrations would be sent by diplomatic bag to the French embassy at Moscow.»

«The French Ministry for Foreign Affairs had been informed by the French ambassador at the Vatican... The Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time, Aristide Briand, was in agreement in giving his approval, and he took into his confidence the secretary general of the minister, Mr. Berthelot, as well as the functionary in charge of religious affairs, Mr. Canet...»⁷⁷¹

After an initial refusal, the French government showed signs of extraordinary dedication to d'Herbigny's cause: after a protest by the ambassador at Moscow, Briand, «becoming feisty, telegraphed the message that he would refuse all visas requested by Russians». Three days later the passport was granted.

If we may be permitted to pose a question here – since Chicherin had an excellent rapport with the very anticlerical French ambassador to Moscow, Mr. Herbette, might the first refusal by the Russians and the courageous intervention of Mr. Briand have been stage managed, simply to show the Pope how ready the French Republic was to fight generously for his interests?

«On Saturday, March 27, 1926, the eve of Palm Sunday, towards eight o'clock in the evening, a republican guard in full uniform brought Father d'Herbigny the passport requested.»⁷⁷²

The nuncio at Berlin, Archbishop Pacelli, had received orders and he conferred the episcopate on the Pope's envoy to Russia in the presence of his secretary, Msgr. Cento. Pacelli however had little confidence in d'Herbigny, and he was surprised at the important duties the Pope had entrusted to him.⁷⁷³

The secrecy of this episcopal consecration was a farce since there were people who knew about it, beginning with the ambassador to Moscow and his wife, who had both been entrusted with the secret. If by chance Chicherin had not yet been informed, that would not last long.

On April 21, 1926, at Moscow, in the church of St.-Louis-des-Français, Bishop d'Herbigny was able to confer episcopal consecration on Father Neveu, a French Assumptionist.

A few days later, Bishop d'Herbigny asked for a visa which would enable him to travel all over the USSR. The same routine ensued as with his entry into Russia. At first the Soviet municipal officials pretended to refuse it. Then they declared to him: «You have an insupportable ambassador. He comes almost every day to request a travel visa for you... we do not want him to complain at Paris.» The visa was then granted, along with permission to prolong his stay in Russia.

So then, Bishop d'Herbigny was able to travel to Kiev and Leningrad. On May 8, he conferred the episcopate on Father Frison and Father Sloskan, again at St.-Louis-des-Français. Alas! We shall see the sad outcome which the Soviets

reserved for these worthy, heroic and saintly priests. They were to have precious little time to exercise their episcopal ministry because, as might have been foreseen, the police had been informed of their consecration.

«Bishop d’Herbigny’s final days at Moscow were spent in visits, making contact with the leaders of various religious groups: Jewish, Protestant and Orthodox.»⁷⁷⁴ What imprudent behaviour for a so-called clandestine missionary! To what purpose were these Moscow visits, first steps of an ecumenism which was dubious and in the end useless?

By May 23, 1926, Bishop d’Herbigny was on his way back to Rome. On the 25th, «he was received in audience by Pius XI for over two hours. At that moment they began considering a third trip to the USSR...»⁷⁷⁵

To thank the French ambassador at Moscow, Pius XI sent him a pontifical gold medal.⁷⁷⁶

THE THIRD TRIP TO THE USSR (AUGUST 4 - SEPTEMBER 8, 1926)

The Pope wanted Bishop d’Herbigny to make a third trip, as early as possible, but this time informing the Moscow authorities that he was a bishop. «The Ministry of Foreign Affairs desired to be of assistance to the Pope in helping to arrange this third trip.» «The French Minister of Public Works had made important orders for raw materials from the USSR, and therefore he had a right to a favour from the ambassador, Litvinoff.» The latter gave a cordial reception to Bishop d’Herbigny, granting him among other things this good conduct certificate:

«You say enough bad things against us to show that you are neither one of our agents nor one of our supporters (sic). But you say nothing but true things, without inventing or distorting. Do the same after this third visit.»⁷⁷⁷

At Moscow, Mr. Herbette immediately informed Chicherin of Bishop d’Herbigny’s arrival. Far from being clandestine, a more official visit could hardly be imagined. But the relations between the Stalin government and Rome were good. They were even excellent, so excellent that Bishop d’Herbigny’s principal mission was, unbelievably, *to found a seminary in the USSR*.

Bishop d'Herbigny arrived at Moscow on August 4, 1926. His biographer tells us:

«During the first few days he brought up the subject of opening a Catholic seminary in the USSR. The council of the people's commissars was informed of this project but had made no decision yet... He was told: "To open a Catholic seminary is not impossible provided the professors are not Polish or from any country which has not recognized the USSR."» Two or three French Jesuits would be accepted. «They would be able to add some Russian professors as well.»⁷⁷⁸

The people's commissary promised to back the request. Three days later there was yet another solemn promise: the visas for three Jesuits would be granted. But Moscow wanted nothing more to do with Father Walsh or any other member of the relief commission for the famine victims. Still, was it not a stunning success for the Vatican envoy?!

Bishop d'Herbigny wished to perform a third episcopal consecration, that of Father Malecki at Leningrad. At length he describes all the stratagems used to perform this consecration secretly. The Soviets, however, found out about it immediately. At Moscow, the president of the Oriental Institute bought some books and recovered some icons, which were brought to Rome through the French embassy's diplomatic bag. This was «a new proof of the support of Mr. Herbette», who also multiplied his public marks of attention: «more numerous invitations to his table, with other hosts, trips in the embassy's vehicle, sometimes with the ambassador or with another member of the embassy, sometimes alone, but always with the chauffeur wearing the tricolour.»

Bishop d'Herbigny returned through Berlin, where Archbishop Pacelli had received the mission of establishing, if not a concordat, at least a *modus vivendi* with Stalin's representatives.⁷⁷⁹

At Moscow, Bishop d'Herbigny had been able to inform the Pope of his stunning successes through the French embassy. Pius XI had given the order to publish the news immediately, and an article appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano*, which included a description of the Pontifical Mass celebrated in Moscow by Bishop d'Herbigny. The Superior General of the Jesuits was extremely annoyed: had it not been agreed that Bishop d'Herbigny's episcopal consecration would remain secret?

THE BRIAND-D'HERBIGNY INTERVIEWS AT PARIS

Bishop d'Herbigny arrived at Paris in mid-September. His first visit was to the nuncio, who informed him in the name of the Pope that it behoved him to go and thank the official personages who had helped make his trip possible: «Mr. Berthelot, secretary general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asked him to report his general impressions of the USSR. Two days later the same Mr. Berthelot received him again and told him that Mr. Briand, who was then president of the Council, desired to see him.» Fifteen days earlier, on August 25, Cardinal Andrieu had made known his condemnation of *Action Française*. But it was necessary now that the Pope support him with all his authority.

The Briand-d'Herbigny interview took place in the third week of September:

«“Thank you for having assisted and made possible these three trips, and everything I was able to do for the Church.” “And trips from which France benefited as well”, Briand responded amiably. Then Briand listened (to d'Herbigny) almost without interrupting. He listened with discretion, without posing questions. He let me direct the conversation as I wished. He was very attentive, intelligently attentive. Two or three times he wrote something down on a note-pad... “*It was a great joy for me*”, he repeated at three different times, “*to do something agreeable for the Pope. I have a great deal of admiration for him* and I wish that France could render other services to the Church and have better relations with it, and be understood by the other side.” Naturally these words were spoken to be repeated to Pius XI.

«The audience, which had been very lively throughout, came to a close. “Mr. President”, I told him, “now that these external things have been said, permit me to add in all simplicity what I regard as my duty: to pray for you, in Russia and in the future also.” He grasped both my hands: “Your Grace, how I thank you for saying that. Nobody, not even the missionary bishops I receive, dares to speak to me this way. Yet I need prayers so much.”

«It is said with conviction, with emotion. A few more words on this theme, and we separate, brought closer by the common Godward thought.»⁷⁸⁰

The French president was a former anarchist, socialist and freemason. He had been the artisan of the law of separation of Church and State, without ever having abjured any of this past. He was certainly showing signs of surprising devotion today!

Nevertheless, when these words were enthusiastically reported to the Pope, they were enough to confirm him in his idea that Mr. Briand was a sincere friend of the papacy, and a zealous apostle of international peace. His political enemies, on the other hand – who accused him of betraying France to the Germans through his blind pacifism – were enemies of the public good and the Church.

It is not the place here to recall the terrible blame and harsh canonical sanctions that struck the members of *Action Française* from September of 1926 to March of 1927. Thus it happened that, to repeat an expression of Cardinal Pacelli, «*well-known and sometimes very meritorious Christians were treated with a rigour not applied to infidels.*»⁷⁸¹

III. BITTER DISILLUSIONS AND PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE

A SORRY BALANCE SHEET

THE DIPLOMATIC RUPTURE OF 1927. Since 1922, Moscow had held continuous talks with Vatican representatives, holding out the hope of a *modus vivendi* which would finally grant religious liberty to Catholics in Russia. Suddenly, at the end of 1927, Moscow began taking a hard line.

«But it soon became clear that the more the Vatican conceded, the more Moscow demanded. After interminable discussions... the crisis came to a head, when the Soviets suddenly announced that there could be no question of a concordat; they intended henceforth to deal with all Catholic problems, Church property, religious education, priests' stipends, etc, by unilateral legislation. The Vatican would not even be consulted.»⁷⁸²

THE SEMINARY IN THE USSR? A FALSE PROMISE! Of course, the will-o-the-wisp of a seminary in Russia came to naught. «Two Jesuits tried to open this seminary at Odessa, but they were sent to Moscow... After a one month stay in the USSR they had to leave, since their-permission to stay had been withdrawn.»⁷⁸³ It is easy to understand the increasing distrust of the Superior

General of the Jesuits, Father Ledochowsky, for the man responsible for the fiasco.

THE BISHOPS PUT UNDER SURVEILLANCE, IMPRISONED, KILLED.

The consecration of three new bishops – with the full knowledge of the Soviet authorities – hardly made any more sense. The least tragic fate fell to Bishop Neveu. In September of 1926, he took up residence in Moscow and served the church of St.-Louis-des-Français. Near the embassy, he continued to correspond with Bishop d’Herbigny and the Pope by diplomatic bag. But all episcopal ministry was practically impossible for him. In 1936, he was able to travel to France. His return visa was refused by the Soviets.⁷⁸⁴

As for Bishop Sloskan, he was able to exercise his ministry for only one year. Arrested on September 17, 1927, he underwent a terrible Calvary for six years. Transferred from the sinister Lubianka prison to various forced labour camps in Siberia, where at each new stop he found twenty or thirty Catholic priests imprisoned like himself – he was returned to the cellars of Lubianka at Moscow. He was exchanged for a Bolshevik prisoner in Latvia, and finally released on January 21, 1933, but of course expelled from the USSR.

Bishop Frison was arrested, released, and put under continual surveillance by the police. He was incarcerated again in 1935 and shot in 1937.

Bishop Malecki, along with the auxiliary bishop which he in turn had consecrated at the request of Bishop d’Herbigny, were both quickly imprisoned, deported to Siberia, and then expelled from the USSR in 1933 and 1934.

All things considered, the consecrations of the new bishops during the missions, which were not really clandestine, unfortunately brought but little fruit for the preservation of Christian life in Russia. Once again, Rome had allowed itself to be duped by the false promises of Moscow.

NEW PROJECTS FOR RUSSIA

In 1927, Bishop d’Herbigny did a great deal of travelling: Serbia, Hungary, Romania, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, the Holy Land and Mount Athos. For all these voyages he drew up a detailed report for Pope Pius XI on his return.

A GREAT HOPE: THE “SEMINARIUM RUSSICUM”. It was undoubtedly

around the end of 1927 that Pius XI accepted the idea of founding a seminary destined to form priests for Russia. Since the project of establishing it at Odessa had failed, why not set it up in Rome itself, like the English and German Colleges? It was to be entrusted to the Jesuits. And so Bishop d'Herbigny, president of the Pontifical Oriental Institute and secretary of the pontifical commission "Pro Russia", with which the seminary was intimately related, would practically be in control of this great work.

On February 11, 1928, the cornerstone of the seminary was blessed by Cardinal Sincero, president of the commission "Pro Russia".

AN ENCYCLICAL TO REVIVE EASTERN CHRISTIAN STUDIES. On September 8, 1928, the Pope published the encyclical *Rerum orientalium*. The encyclical contained a long historical part describing the solicitude of the Popes for the Eastern Churches. It then recommended the Pontifical Oriental Institute to bishops and superiors of religious orders, insistently inviting them to send their subjects there. The Pope saw the development of Eastern Christian studies in the West as the principal means of effecting the return of schismatics to Roman unity.

It was a beautiful enterprise which could have been effective within its own sphere if, at the same time, Rome had acted energetically and wisely to liberate these poor peoples of the East from the communist yoke.

At about the same time, Bishop d'Herbigny was encountering increasing opposition both inside the Society of Jesus and from various members of the Curia. The Pope continued to have complete confidence in him and went out of his way to show it. Thus he installed the commission "Pro Russia", in which Bishop d'Herbigny had been the workhorse, «at the Vatican, beside the Secretariat of State, which caused a great deal of murmuring», writes Father Lesourd.⁷⁸⁵

THE CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE RUSSICUM. On August 15, 1929, by the apostolic constitution *Quam curam de Orientalibus*, the Pope canonically erected the new "Seminarium Russicum". From this seminary, reserved in the first place for Russian subjects, but also open to subjects of other nationalities, «will come forth new apostles, imbued with the Roman mentality, to return to their fellow citizens.»

The Russian College was placed under the patronage of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, and was next to the Oriental Institute, which the Pope had just installed on the Esquiline hill. It was to work together with the Oriental Institute, being directed by members of the commission “Pro Russia”.⁷⁸⁶

There was only one fly in the ointment. How were these erudite priests, once they were prepared for the apostolate in Russia, actually going to begin exercising their ministry? Hadn’t a law of April 8, 1929 just instigated a renewal of the persecutions?

In the beginning of his Apostolic Constitution the Pope brought up this sad question:

«Before all and most especially Our pastoral solicitude reaches this noble Russian people, which has been cast into an abyss of innumerable evils, after an upheaval which has been raging furiously in this country already for quite some time. Satanic snares have been laid there especially for youths and adolescents, so that being perverted by the most impious doctrines, they might become accustomed to pursuing the most implacable hatred against men and, horrible as it is to say, God Himself. No hope has appeared that this sad situation will be ameliorated soon.

«Nevertheless, our faith teaches Us to hope against all hope, because nothing shall be impossible with God. The duties of the Sovereign Pontificate compel Us to occupy Ourselves, as far as possible, with the preparation of everything which might contribute, according to the designs of Providence, to the new spiritual resurrection in Russia when the time of divine mercy shall have arrived.»⁷⁸⁷

This time of Divine Mercy had arrived two months earlier at Tuy, where the Holy Trinity had manifested its great design in favour of Russia. But would the Pope deign to accept the conditions?

IV. THE POLICY OF MEN AND THE POLICY OF GOD

Meanwhile, nothing but alarming news was coming out of Russia: arrests of bishops and priests, and persecutions of all sorts.⁷⁸⁸ In May of 1929, Georges Goyau had published his moving work, “God Among the Soviets”, revealing to

the West the atrocious persecutions in the USSR. Bishop d'Herbigny himself published two small pamphlets: "The Anti-religious Front in Soviet Russia" (April-November 1929), and at the beginning of 1930, "The Anti-religious War in Soviet Russia. The Christmas Campaign" (December 1929 - January 1930).⁷⁸⁹

SPRING, 1929: THE VATICAN ABANDONS THE CRISTEROS

At the very moment when events in Russia demonstrated the futility of all compromise with the Reds, the Vatican once again opted for a policy of compromise with the Revolution and persecutors of religion. This time it was at the instigation of the governments of Washington and Paris. The subject was Mexico.

The war of the Cristeros began in 1926. These soldiers of Christ the King were Vendean Mexicans, who following the call of their bishop and with the tacit consent of Rome, had risen up against a revolutionary government, which had decided to annihilate all traces of the Catholic religion in the country.⁷⁹⁰

After three years of heroic fighting for the salvation of religion, during which thousands of martyrs had shed their blood, "the Christiade", like Franco's "Crusade" in Spain later on, was on the verge of a definitive victory, which would have finally liberated the country from Masonic and antichristian oppression.

During this time Aristide Briand has requested his chargé d'affaires in Mexico, Ernest Lagarde, to write up a long report on the politico-religious situation in Mexico. The report, of course, was favourable to the government and hostile to the Cristeros. It had a decisive influence, since the French embassy at the Holy See passed it on to the Secretariat of State. Jean Meyer reports that «the U.S. State Department had a copy as well, *and both Rome and Washington determined their Mexican policy according to the contents of this analysis.*»⁷⁹¹

The Masonic government did in fact feel threatened during the spring of 1929. It began talks with the Vatican, which capitulated across the board, content with a vague promise that the laws of persecution, without being abrogated, would no longer be enforced. The bishops had to order the victorious Cristeros to lay down their arms to their former persecutors. The latter did not even wait a few months to avenge themselves by innumerable assassinations and the renewal of the

persecutions.⁷⁹²

MARCH 19, 1930: THE MASS OF REPARATION FOR THE PERSECUTIONS IN RUSSIA

In this context, the Pope published his letter to Cardinal Pompili on February 2, 1930. We have already quoted from the essential part of this letter.⁷⁹³ It was the first time since the beginning of his pontificate that the Pope had condemned the Bolshevik persecution so strongly.

It must however be pointed out that this anticommunist action on the Pope's part was still very limited. The Pope had not written an encyclical, as he would soon do against fascism, but a simple letter of a few pages to Cardinal Pompili. It had no great repercussions.⁷⁹⁴

Once again the Pope protested against the atrocious persecutions and against the anti-religious policy of the Bolsheviks. Still, he did not pronounce a firm condemnation of the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. He did not condemn communism as such, or under all its aspects.

Why was this restriction employed? Possibly because a universal and solemn condemnation would have appeared to contradict and nullify, after the fact, all the Vatican's attempts at conciliation and talks with the representatives of this «intrinsically perverse» communism, as well as the talks going on at the same time with the Mexican government.

Besides, the Vatican unfortunately was too attached to the Western democracies, which were constant accomplices of Bolshevism. This was obvious at the Mass of March 19, 1930, at St. Peter's in Rome, a «Mass of expiation, propitiation and reparation», at which fifty thousand people attended. However, diplomats accredited to the Holy See by nations which had already recognized the Soviet government were not present, although they had been invited.⁷⁹⁵

THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE "FILIOQUE". In short, after this Mass of March 19, 1930, everything continued as before. One incident in particular made the rounds at Rome. It caused quite a stir in ecclesiastical circles.

«The liturgical chants of the Mass had to be done by the Basilians, and their

seminarians at the Russian College, and by the Russicum. From the beginning of the preparations, a problem came up: in the chant of the Credo, would the *Filioque* be sung, as the Ruthenian bishops had long since introduced into their liturgy?» Or would it not be sung, since it is not obligatory for the Russians!

«So two opposing tendencies appeared, and became obvious in the choir practices. Cardinal Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches and president of the commission “Pro Russia”, had adopted the Ruthenian position, and ordered the *Filioque* to be chanted.»

Bishop d’Herbigny was of the contrary opinion, so as not to hurt Russian susceptibilities.

«It was requested that the matter be referred to the Pope, who unhesitatingly adopted the Russian position, deciding on the omission of the *Filioque* in his presence...»⁷⁹⁶

The day of the ceremony, in the sacristy, Cardinal Sincero publicly demonstrated his dissatisfaction with Bishop d’Herbigny, because he attributed the Pope’s decision to his influence.

BISHOP D’HERBIGNY, PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION “PRO RUSSIA”. After this fiasco, Pius XI received Bishop d’Herbigny in audience, and after telling him of his joy at the ceremony and «the importance of the *Credo* sung without the *Filioque*», he informed him of the sanction taken against Cardinal Sincero, who was dismissed from his presidency of the commission “Pro Russia”.⁷⁹⁷

On April 6, 1930, the Pope manifested his decision by a *Motu Proprio*:

«We separate the Commission for Russia from the Congregation to which it had been connected until now, and We declare and constitute it entirely independent of all other authority except Our own; We name as president Our venerable brother Michel d’Herbigny, titular bishop of Ilion, to whom We confirm all the rights and powers which the president of the Commission enjoyed until now, and which we confirm for him as long as is necessary.»⁷⁹⁸

When the Pope learned of the request for the consecration of Russia a few months later, if he conferred with anyone, it was undoubtedly Bishop d'Herbigny. And the year 1930 went by, along with the first few months of 1931, without anything being done to fulfil Heaven's requests. This explains Our Lord's complaint of August, 1931: «They did not want to heed My request...»⁷⁹⁹

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE (OCTOBER 1986)

On the odious betrayal of the Cristeros by the Vatican, one may consult the final chapters of Hugues Keraly's work, *Les Cristeros* (chapters IX and X, pp. 171-207).⁸⁰⁰

On the Ostpolitik of Pius XI, there is Father Wenger's work, *Entre Rome et Moscou. 1900-1950*,⁸⁰¹ as well as Hansjakob Stehle's book, *Die Ostpolitik des Vatikans, 1917-1975*, (chapters I to IV, pp. 11-149).⁸⁰²

Some useful additional information, which on the whole confirms our analysis, is found in the study by Étienne Fouilloux, *Les Catholiques et l'unité chrétienne du XIXe au XXe siècle*.⁸⁰³ Thus Étienne Fouilloux reveals to us that although Archbishop Pacelli was directly involved in these talks with representatives of the Kremlin, he personally was hostile to this policy, and on this subject it was already written in 1922: «During a recent interview», wrote the French minister in Bavaria at the Quai d'Orsay, «Archbishop Pacelli told me that, in his strictly personal opinion, he regretted the policy followed by the Holy See vis-à-vis the Soviet Russians. He believed that they were real criminals who were unworthy of the slightest appearance of trust.» (Note of May 14, 1922, cited by Fouilloux, p. 119).

CHAPTER IX

«RUSSIA WILL SPREAD HER ERRORS, CAUSING WARS AND PERSECUTIONS...» (1931 - 1937)

Let us consider the words of Saint Margaret Mary, revealing to us the secrets of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, in His sovereign conduct in our history. She writes:

«... His power can do everything which pleases Him, although He does not always do it, not wishing to do violence to the heart of man, so that leaving man in his liberty, *He might have more means to reward or chastise him.*»⁸⁰⁴

THE GREAT SECRET, ALTHOUGH NOT DISCLOSED, BEGINS TO BE FULFILLED...

In the years 1929-1931, everything depended on the Pope. If Russia had been consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, neither the Second World War nor the explosive expansion of communism would have taken place. But since it did not happen, the chastisements began to take place, and misfortunes befell Christendom.

FIRST OF ALL IN CATHOLIC SPAIN. The misfortunes fell with unprecedented rapidity and violence. Already they foretold the coming contagion, the Red leprosy which was to ravage the world, nation by nation. When God's designs are seen in the light of the Secret of Fatima, the war in Spain was undoubtedly the terrible lesson, the final warning addressed to the pastors of the Church. It was an urgent incentive for them to finally fulfil Heaven's designs before it was too late, before even heavier chastisements befell the world.

It is a remarkable fact: at the very moment when the Pope refused to fulfil Heaven's requests – during the opening months of 1931 – the prophecy of the great Secret began to be fulfilled to the letter in Spain: «*Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions against the Church.*» For in this revolution, which first of all was Masonic before becoming

openly Bolshevik, the best historians have proven that Russia's role was decisive from beginning to end. The process was exactly the same as in 1917. The essential phases of the Russian Revolution repeated themselves, only over a longer period of time: it went from an anti-monarchical revolution to a liberal and Masonic parliamentary democracy, which soon became, as its logical fulfilment – or its natural, rotten fruit – a Bolshevik tyranny.

... THEN OVER THE WORLD. The year 1931 was also a turning point in the period between the two world wars. Aristide Briand, the “pilgrim of peace”, had scarcely disappeared when his blind pacifism began to produce the most deadly seeds of war. Germany rearmed itself and already outlined a Germano-Soviet accord, faced with a powerless, democratic France. From that point, the most farsighted thinkers witnessed the escalation of danger and an almost inexorable march towards a second world conflict. International politics were already sinking from the post-war into another pre-war period...

The Vatican, unfortunately, was unable to foresee this terrible future – which the Fatima seer could have revealed to it, if only she had been requested to reveal the great Secret. It continued to follow the same policy. Unfortunately, this too contributed to the misfortunes of the Church and Christendom...

I. RISING DANGERS (1931-1935)

1931: IN SPAIN, ROME OPTS FOR A RALLYING TO THE REPUBLIC

«The clergy had not remained insensible to the liberal ideas of the nineteenth century. The Christian Democrats were gaining ground and Pius XI, in full Wilsonian illusion, encouraged them. He did not like Alfonso XIII, and it could be said that the Republic had been made by the Vatican. In any case he did not oppose it, and the village curates told people to vote for it. Thus the clergy imagined that it could woo its worst enemies, and on the pretext of not remaining insensible to “progress”, it abandoned reality for a fallacious policy of *ralliement*.»⁸⁰⁵

Rome certainly did nothing to uphold the Catholic monarchy of Alfonso XIII. Henri Daniel-Rops avows it openly:

«After the collapse of General Berenguer's dictatorship (April 14, 1931)

and the departure of King Alfonso XIII into exile, a new page of Spanish history seemed to open, with no suggestion of the tragedy that was to follow. The revolution had been effected quite peacefully, and the outlook was so optimistic that the new republic was nicknamed *Niña bonita* – “pretty girl”.

«... Catholics meanwhile gave the new regime a hearty welcome; some of them even appearing to forget rather quickly the historical role of the Spanish monarchy in defence of the faith. There were, too, some distinguished Catholics, e.g. Alcala Zamora, among the new rulers. *Te Deum* was sung in many places to celebrate the victory of the Republic; bishops and Catholic Action groups saluted the regime, which moreover began by showing marked respect for the Church. The nuncio, Msgr. Tedeschini, had cordial conversations with representatives of the government.»⁸⁰⁶

In their collective Letter of July 1, 1931, the Spanish bishops wrote: «... Following the rules laid down by the Holy See, the bishops resolutely align themselves with the established powers. They strive to collaborate with them for the common good.»⁸⁰⁷

In fact Alcala Zamora, by exercising the office of President of the Republic, was a puppet for an entirely Masonic government. A surface Catholic, he solemnly promised on April 15 to respect the liberty of the Church. Less than one month later he had betrayed this promise. For six years he continued to preside over a fiercely anticlerical and fundamentally Masonic Republic, always playing the game of the left-wing parties until the Bolsheviks sent him away, no longer needing his good offices...

MAY 1931: SPAIN IN FLAMES

«By the beginning of May, churches began to burn under the indifferent eye of the police. The work was methodically accomplished. The altars were ravaged and smashed to bits. Holy water fonts were smashed, the wooden statues were burned, the choir-lofts denuded. The convents were devastated, the libraries were pillaged and violated.

«Destruction was methodically ordered in all cities. On May 11, twelve

convents and schools, including the University of Arts and Trades, were burned at Madrid. An equal number burned at Alicante. At Malaga, before the eyes of government troops and the police, who did nothing, the convent of Jesuits, the convent of Augustinians and the episcopal palace were burned in broad daylight. At Cadix, the convent of San Domingo, the Jesuits and Saint Francis along with the Carmel were burned. At Burgos the convents were pillaged. At Grenada, at Cordova, and at Seville churches were burned. At Malaga, cadavers of nuns were disinterred and profaned. The guilty parties were not even bothered.»⁸⁰⁸

Cardinal Segura, the Primate of Spain, who dared to warn his faithful against the Republic, was arrested on June 14 and led away to the border.

Such events were clear and extremely alarming portents for the future, especially since anarchical and communist movements, which had been almost non-existent under the monarchy, had seen their power grow tenfold within a few months.

Rome, however, wanted to maintain its policy of *entente* with the Republic no matter what the cost, and imposed it on the bishops. «In spite of the repeated offences done to persons, things, and the rights of the Church, the bishops persisted in their firm resolution *not to disturb the regime of concord previously established.*» They exhorted their sheep to submission, patience, and to peace. «And the Catholic people followed us», they observed.⁸⁰⁹

A MASONIC REPUBLIC, PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH. From there things quickly went from bad to worse. On June 28, a constituent assembly was elected. On October 13, Azana, the prime minister, dared to declare to the Cortes [the Spanish legislature]: «*Today Spain has ceased to be Catholic.*» And in fact the constitution promulgated on December 9, 1931, was not content with the separation of Church and State. It was aggressively anticlerical and persecuted the Church. The Society of Jesus was dissolved and its goods confiscated. The other religious orders were paralyzed in their apostolate.

The decrees implementing these laws were not long in coming. On January 23, 1932, came the decree against the Jesuits; on February 2, the suppression of the crucifix in the schools; on March 2, the institution of divorce; and the institution of civil marriage three months later. In short order followed the laws confiscating the goods of the Church and against religious congregations.

THE SITUATION IN SPAIN AS SEEN FROM TUY. Sister Lucy, who lived in Galicia for six years, perceived the gravity of the situation right away: «The question of religion must be decided in these very days», she wrote in October, 1931. «We do not know if it will be. We are in God's hands.» At certain moments the torment seemed to die down: «For the moment (she writes) we are calm. Nobody comes to harass us.» However, for Easter 1932, the Jesuits had to leave their residence at Tuy. The suppression of all religious congregations was imminent, Lucy even saw the heaviest trials up ahead. «We will see, this is what the Good Lord wills for us. The only thing I fear is that Our Good Lord will not find me worthy to suffer for His love.»⁸¹⁰

FINALLY, POPE PIUS XI INTERVENES

Almost two years after the promulgation of the republican constitution – laicizing and anti-religious in nature – the Pope finally decided to intervene publicly. On June 3, he published the encyclical *Dilectissima nobis*, where he protests against «the unjust situation of the Catholic Church in Spain.» While insisting on a sincere, loyal and lasting rallying to the Republic on the Church's part, the Pope deplored the laws of persecution.⁸¹¹ This condemnation, late and watered down as it was, nevertheless had great repercussions. The Catholics regained control, as is eloquently witnessed by the elections to the legislature on November 19, 1933. The right scored a crushing victory. A sigh of relief was breathed at Madrid, while at Rome the hope of a good and sound Spanish republic was reborn. Gil Robles, founder of *Popular Catholic Action*, even thought it wise to leave power in the hands of the socialists!

Taking advantage of this delay which left it full freedom to manoeuvre, the communist party of Largo Caballero, the “Spanish Lenin”, grew at an alarming rate. At Moscow, an exposition was devoted to the future Spanish revolution. Yvon Delbos writes: «It appears that the Soviets counted on the first successes of their contagion coming among our friends across the Pyrenees. In this visit one almost finds the smell of blood.»⁸¹² The Spanish Republic, fortified by the support or at least the political apathy of Catholics, led the country inexorably towards the communist revolution.

FROM POST-WAR TO PRE-WAR

At the same time, before the eyes of a blind, apathetic Europe, Germany witnessed the staggering rise of Hitlerism which resulted in his seizing power. On January 30, 1933, Hitler was elected chancellor. The famous Reichstag fire came on February 27. On March 24, Hitler had full power put into his hands. Nothing was lacking to this victory: the Pope saw fit to continue his pro-German policy, and on July 20, he signed a concordat with Hitler. On August 30, there was held the First Congress of Nuremberg – this idolatrous liturgy which the Party rendered to Germany and its pagan gods; and on September 14, the Nazis were declared the sole party. On November 12, Hitler conducted a plebiscite and came away triumphantly with 93.4% of the votes. The following year he was proclaimed chancellor and president of the Reich, by a vote of 38 million to 4 million.

It was Hitler's victory, and Stalin's as well. The latter, after conducting a horrible genocide upon his own people during the years 1929-1933, saw his government recognized by Roosevelt on November 16, 1933. Stalin's government was admitted to the League of Nations on September 18, 1934. He had not mitigated his furious persecutions in the slightest. On May 15, 1932, he had launched a «five year plan against religion», which envisaged closure of all religious buildings and «the banishment of the very idea of God» by May 1, 1937.⁸¹³

Already, with the appearance of these two monsters, and the rise of these two friends-enemies on the political scene, one could foresee a new world war taking shape. It was the war predicted by Our Lady of Fatima on July 13, 1917: «*The war is going to end, but if men do not cease offending God, another worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI.*»

Did the Pope see it coming? Undoubtedly he did. For in 1932, in one of his most beautiful encyclicals, *Caritate Christi*, he wrote at length of the menacing peril of militant atheism: «Woe to humanity», he declared, «if God is so outraged by His creatures that in His justice He gives free rein to this wave of devastation, using it as a rod to chastise the world!» And faced with this «revolt of man against God», the cause of so many evils, he insistently invited the faithful to offer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus prayers and penances in reparation for so many crimes which outrage It.⁸¹⁴ He did not, however, see fit to do more, and correspond to the express requests of the Queen of Heaven.

ROME AND FATIMA: AN ICE-COLD SILENCE

Indeed since the years 1930-1931, when he had been informed of the request for the consecration of Russia, Pope Pius XI remained dead silent on Fatima. On November 10, 1933, in an apostolic letter to the Portuguese bishops recommending Catholic Action to them, the Pope declared:

«In your country, where the Christian spirit is so flourishing... *and which more recently the Virgin Mother of God has deigned to favour with extraordinary benefits*, it will not be difficult to find good citizens who will enrol spontaneously, and with a generous heart, in this militia of Jesus Christ.»⁸¹⁵

While speaking to the Portuguese bishops, the Pope had been content to repeat, in 1933, an expression that Benedict XV used six months after the apparition, in April of 1918. It must unfortunately be said that the Pope could hardly do less in favour of Fatima. This veiled allusion was followed by what must be called an ice-cold silence on Fatima. Clearly, the Pope had not appreciated that the seer dared to indicate to him, even in the name of Heaven, a policy to follow and an action to be performed for the good of the Church and the peace of the world, which seemed to him contrary to his designs. The direction of the Church was his business – he knew, better than anybody else, the road to follow! We wish we were wrong, but this really seems to have been the Pope's reaction to the requests of Our Lady passed on by Sister Lucy.

In his detailed chronology of the events of Fatima, Father Rolim points out that on May 13, 1932, the apostolic nuncio presided over the blessing of the monument of the Sacred Heart. But from that point until the death of Pius XI, we find no more mention of any intervention either of the Pope or the nuncio in favour of Fatima.⁸¹⁶ The exhaustive chronology established by Father Netter indicates nothing further.⁸¹⁷

THE SAD END OF OSTPOLITIK (1933)

Meanwhile, the Russian policy conducted by Pius XI and Father d'Herbigny since 1922 ended tragically. After a final papal audience on September 29, 1933, the Pope's advisor for Russian affairs left Rome, never to return. On October 23, he was invited by Father Ledochowsky, Superior General of the Jesuits, to

submit his resignation from the Commission “Pro Russia”, and a few days later, his resignation from all his functions at the Vatican. The Pope had to resign himself to banishing from Rome the man who had been one of his most intimate collaborators for ten years.

In 1931, Cardinal Pacelli, who had been Secretary of State since February 1930, desired to suppress the commission “Pro Russia”. But Bishop d’Herbigny remained all-powerful with the Pope.

Things remained in that condition until 1933. That year a certain Father Deubner suddenly disappeared without any trace, after having visited Berlin in the company of Clara Zetkin, the celebrated Jewish communist and international agent of Moscow. Deubner had worked for several years as a translator for the commission “Pro Russia”, and had been a protégé of Bishop d’Herbigny. Bishop d’Herbigny had even made Deubner his secretary, and their names appeared as co-authors on the title of his last book, which d’Herbigny had just published. Only then was it learned that Father Deubner had been Clara Zetkin’s nephew!

Suddenly, a good number of things were explained, reports Joseph Vandrisse. «Bishop d’Herbigny regularly received letters from Bishop Neveu, apostolic administrator of Moscow, who corresponded with him by diplomatic bag. His secretary read the correspondence. At the Secretariat of State, directed by Cardinal Pacelli, there was astonishment over the leaks. The news from Russia was clearly bad: cases of arrest and torture multiplied.»⁸¹⁸

The biographical data on Deubner, reported later by Bishop d’Herbigny to justify his having confided in this curious figure, is imprecise and full of gaps. It is a long way from removing all suspicion. Quite the contrary, Alexander Deubner went from the University of Louvain to an apostolic school of the Assumptionist Fathers. He was dismissed in 1926 for his unstable character. He got himself ordained a priest in Constantinople by an Eastern Catholic bishop and was incardinated by the Metropolitan of Lvov. After arriving at Paris in 1927, he apostatized to join the Orthodox, and began consorting immediately with personalities of *Action Française*. But scarcely eight months later, he abjured his “double error” to make his solemn return to the flock, sure of being absolved enthusiastically by the passionate enemies of *Action Française*: Archbishop Ricard at Nice, and before long Bishop d’Herbigny at Rome. Bishop d’Herbigny welcomed him as a student at the Oriental Institute, before making him his collaborator and private secretary. It is hard to imagine a better channel to come

so quickly into close contact with the principal official responsible for relations between the Vatican and the USSR...

Bishop d'Herbigny tried to justify himself and refused to admit that Deubner had been a spy. But as J. Vandrisse writes, «from this point on his rebuttals lack frankness». Everything leads us to believe that in effect, since 1928, Father Deubner had been in the service of Moscow. In any case, this was the conclusion drawn by Cardinal Pacelli and the Pope himself, and it was the official reason for Bishop d'Herbigny's dismissal.⁸¹⁹

What is astonishing is that Pope Pius XI had placed so much confidence in Bishop d'Herbigny for so long, when the majority of his initiatives demonstrated both a dismaying lack of good sense, and presumptuous imprudence. Hadn't the Superior General of the Jesuits warned the Holy Father already in 1926, before the first mission to Russia? «Father d'Herbigny is emotional, hypersensitive, lacking in discretion, and in addition he is extremely impractical. *This will end in grave disillusionment.*» These words are sadly prophetic.⁸²⁰

On March 30, 1934, *L'Osservatore Romano* announced both the resignation of Bishop d'Herbigny and the suppression of the Commission "Pro Russia" such as it had been constituted in 1930.⁸²¹ Relieved of his official functions, Bishop d'Herbigny gradually saw himself be deprived of all ministry. Before long he was reduced to retirement and absolute silence.⁸²² Yet his name continued to be connected to over ten years of Ostpolitik, which was as deadly as it was illusory. The time had come to put an end to it!

THE PERPETUAL PROFESSION OF SISTER LUCY

Meanwhile, at Tuy, the Fatima seer humbly went on with her life as a lay sister. Since her entire duty had been fulfilled by making known Heaven's desires, she remained in peace, devoting herself with joy to the little tasks confided to her.

Later on she recalled, «Parents and friends were well aware of where I was, and every day my "incognito" status became more and more relative.» However, since she was still under an oath, she continued to conceal her identity. There are a good many amusing anecdotes about how clever she could be in getting out of awkward situations:

«One day a young Portuguese priest requested to celebrate Mass in the chapel of the Dorotheans. At that moment Lucy was working in the sacristy. After completing the Holy Sacrifice, the priest thanked the Sister sacristan who arranged the vestments in the drawers and said to her: “Sister, may I see your celebrated companion Mary of Sorrows?” “Celebrated?” Lucy answered with a surprised smile. “Yes!” the priest answered. “How is she?” “A Sister like the others... like me... we are all alike.” And the good ecclesiastic left Tuy without suspecting that he had spoken to Lucy herself.

«Another time, accompanied by a Portuguese Sister, she left on foot to go to Valença, on the other bank of the Minho, to go shopping. They were both smiling radiantly; they were going to Portugal, their country!

«After passing the international bridge, without even being noticed by the police guards and customs, they went on towards the old Portuguese citadel with their black robe, their cape and frilled head-dress which, under their veil made of black gauze, enclosed their fresh and smiling faces.

«Suddenly three women recognized the uniform and stopped before them: “Dorothean Sisters?” “Yes.” “Portuguese... from Tuy?” “Yes, ladies.” “That’s just where we are going. We want to see Lucy, the Fatima seer. She is in Spain, isn’t she?” “Oh, no”, Lucy answered. “At the moment she is in Portugal.” “What do you mean? What a shame!” “Yes, yes, ladies, she is in Portugal.” “And if she were at Tuy, could we see her? They say it is difficult!” “Certainly you could.” “And how?” “How? By looking at her, same as you are looking at me now...”

«They exchanged good wishes and left, and the two young Sisters went on their way, right up to the old drawbridge which brought them to Valença...»⁸²³

On October 3, 1934, the feast of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, Sister Lucy pronounced her perpetual vows. For the ceremony her mother, two of her sisters and some of her cousins had come from Portugal. Since Maria Rosa had insisted on offering her daughter a nuptial present, Lucy had answered finally that she would like some flowers... and some bees. The Santos brought a carefully packed hive from Aljustrel...

This time Bishop da Silva was able to preside at the feast, and his mere presence

was enough to remove the seer's incognito for good. Of course she took advantage of the occasion to converse with him freely, and remind him once more of her dear devotion of reparation. A few days later she confided to Father Gonçalves:

«His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria promised me that next year he will promote the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I believe that God is also counting on your cooperation. As for the consecration of Russia, it seems unbelievable, but I forgot to mention it to the bishop. Patience! I am sorry to see it stay like this, because I don't think that Our Good Lord likes it, but I can't do more than to pray and sacrifice myself for His love.»⁸²⁴

A few days after her perpetual profession, Sister Lucy had to depart from Tuy to return to the college of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows at Pontevedra, where she had already done her postulancy.⁸²⁵ She had been scheduled to leave Tuy on October 6, but she was prevented by strikes, and she was unable to reach her new post for another three days. In fact, all of Spain was shaken by grave revolutionary troubles...

THE RED OCTOBER OF 1934: THE REVOLUTION IN ASTURIAS

«The miners of the Asturias were considered the principal group among the shock troops of the proletarian revolution. They had been powerfully armed, thanks to shipments of material and munitions by the Comintern. The most important delivery came from the Soviet steamship *Turquesa*.»⁸²⁶

The day after Gil Robles' entry into the government, Largo Caballero gave the order for the insurrection. At Madrid, in the principal cities and even in the Basque provinces, the uprising was quickly crushed. On the other hand, in Asturias and particularly at Oviedo, the revolution triumphed. Twenty thousand men from among the regular troops had to be sent before the revolution could be defeated, at the cost of heavy losses. There were several thousand victims, and many buildings were destroyed. The revolutionaries gave themselves over to pillaging and massacres: «At Campo de San Francisco priests were doused with gasoline and burned alive; at Sama de Langres one of them was hung on a meat-hook, naked, and with this sign on his stomach: "Pork meat for sale."» Atrocities of this kind multiplied, the churches were burned, the library of Oviedo was

dynamited and two hundred thousand books were destroyed, etc. It was Bolshevik barbarism in all its horror...

The demo-Christian and Masonic government shot the miners and spared the communist leaders⁸²⁷ ... who took advantage of this impunity to constitute a formidable front with the anarchists and socialists.

1935: AGAIN THE MOMENT CAME TO CONSECRATE RUSSIA TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Perhaps after new requests from Sister Lucy, or perhaps after seeing the imminent danger of a Bolshevik revolution really succeeding, Father Gonçalves occupied himself once more with the consecration of Russia. But since 1929-1930, five years had passed. Did the promises of Russia's conversion still hold good? Was it necessary to convince Bishop da Silva himself to intervene with the Holy See? Given Rome's silence when the matter was first brought up, would it not be better to ask only for the consecration of the world by the Holy Father alone? This request had already been made by various Marian Congresses and movements. It undoubtedly would be easier to obtain than the consecration of Russia by the Pope and all the bishops of the world...

On January 21, 1935, Sister Lucy answered these and various other questions of Father Gonçalves in an important letter.⁸²⁸

A NEW ATTEMPT MUST BE MADE. «... Regarding the matter of Russia, I think it would please Our Lord very much if you worked to make the Holy Father comply with His wishes.»

FOR THREE YEARS OUR LORD HAS NOT ASKED FOR ANYTHING... «About three years ago Our Lord was very displeased because His request had not been attended to and I made this fact known to the bishop in a letter. Up to date Our Lord has asked nothing more of me, except for prayers and sacrifices.»

NEVERTHELESS, THE PROMISE CONTINUES. «When I am speaking intimately with Him, it seems to me that He is ready to show His mercy toward Russia, as He promised five years ago, and whom He wishes so much to save.

«But you can see that to speak intimately with God is very different from speaking personally⁸²⁹, and that the doubt of error is always greater.»

NOTHING SHOULD BE CHANGED IN HEAVEN'S REQUESTS. «Now I will answer your questions.

«First – If I think that you should insist with the bishop? I think that it would please Our Lord very much.

«Second – If you should modify anything? I think that it should be exactly as Our Lord asked it...»⁸³⁰

Sister Lucy was right for two reasons. First of all because when God asks for something, the whole merit of filial obedience lies in accomplishing exactly and lovingly everything He has requested. Sister Lucy was right for another reason: there was little chance that the Holy Father would be more willing to perform an act which indeed would be easier, but nothing more than a pious suggestion, and no longer a pressing demand of Our Lady Herself, accompanied by magnificent promises.

Moreover, here is the proof, as related by Father Geenen:

«In 1933, Bishop Hiral began the construction of the Cathedral of Port Said, at the entrance of the Suez Canal, the maritime crossroads of the world. It was dedicated to Mary under the title, “Queen of the World”. While passing through Rome in 1935, Bishop Hiral had asked Pius XI if the construction of the new Cathedral, the first of its name, was not the favourable occasion to make the consecration of the world and proclaim the Universal Queenship of Mary. “Be patient”, the Pope told him, “we are waiting for the hour of Providence.”»⁸³¹

Sister Lucy, however, was untiring in her continued insistence. Nor did she get discouraged. On May 26, 1935, she wrote to Father Gonçalves:

«... On the 10th, I wrote to His Excellency the bishop, reminding him of the promise that he had made about propagating the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary this year. I hope this is the moment designated by Our Good Lord for the unfolding of what I think is the Divine Will. I hope that you will be one of the main workers in this field of the Lord...

«If you wish to consult with Father Aparicio in order to give any added impulse to the reparatory devotion of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, you have all the liberty to do so. I am your most humble servant.»⁸³²

On July 29, 1935, she wrote to Father Aparicio:

«I hope Your Reverence will not recoil at the mention of Russia and the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for Our Lord has especially entrusted this enterprise to Your Reverence.»⁸³³

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER, 1935: LUCY RECOUNTS FATIMA

THE INTERROGATION BY ANTERO DE FIGUEIREDO. From September 16-20, 1935, Sister Lucy had to submit to one of the most difficult interrogations she was ever subjected to in her whole life, as the chief witness to the apparitions. The writer Antero de Figueiredo arrived at Pontevedra with a letter from the Mother Provincial, ordering Lucy in the name of holy obedience to answer all the questions put to her. In her Memoirs she describes the frightful interior torment which she felt then, being on her own resources without an advisor or guide, and torn between the duty of obedience and the divine inspiration not to reveal all her intimate secrets to a man of the world «who seemed to understand nothing about the spiritual life or the elementary practice of the Christian life.»⁸³⁴

THE WRITING OF THE FIRST MEMOIR. Also at this time, after an exchange of letters with Bishop da Silva regarding the transfer of Jacinta's mortal remains to the cemetery of Fatima, Lucy wrote her First Memoir. She described her childhood memories of her cousin and especially her devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary with such charm and fervour, demonstrating real literary talent, that she soon had to take up her pen again to complete her first notebook and recall other memories.⁸³⁵

II. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: A FINAL, TERRIBLE WARNING

THE «POPULAR FRONT»: BOLSHEVISM IN POWER (FEBRUARY - JULY 1936)

The revolt of Asturias in 1934 had only been practice, the dress-rehearsal for the great Spanish Revolution, which had long been decided on and prepared by Stalin's agents.

In July - August, 1935, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International took place at Moscow. «The glorious flag of the Soviets was able to fly over Asturias for fifteen days...», it was triumphantly proclaimed. The plans were drawn up, and the electoral tactics to be followed were fixed. On January 15, 1936, it was put into effect by the formation of the "Popular Front", which combined all the forces of the left in one united bloc.⁸³⁶

AT THE FEBRUARY 16 ELECTIONS, total votes for the Right gained a majority of five hundred thousand over those of the Left. But some clever gerrymandering and voiding of the votes of some provinces gave the *Popular Front* a striking triumph: an absolute majority in the chamber, with one hundred and eighteen more deputies than the Right!

Once the farce of the elections was over with, the Revolution could be unleashed. The demo-Christian facade of President Zamora had outlived its usefulness. He was replaced by the Red, Azana. The most influential men in the military were removed and General Franco, the chief of staff, was sent to the Canary Islands.

"VIVA RUSSIA!" In the month of March, a bloody wave of Red terror began to sweep over the country: demonstrations, strikes, shootings, burnings, massacres. It was the anarchy of the revolution in all its horror. Above all, an unbelievably violent anticlericalism was unleashed.

«Not only were legal steps taken immediately to expel the religious congregations, close the Catholic schools and forbid public worship, but monstrous cruelty too was given free rein. One hundred and sixty churches and convents were destroyed by fire; priests and religious were hunted through the streets like wild beasts; at Madrid five nuns were lynched. Largo Caballero announced "the near approach of total victory for the Red flag". Demonstrators, parading in red shirts and with red flags flying, alternated their howls of "*Viva Russia!*"»⁸³⁷

This significant cry did indeed correspond to the reality. In a long, official report presented to the "Committee for Non-intervention" in 1936, President Salazar

established, with an impressive mass of sure and precise information, the decisive role of Russia in the Spanish Revolution: «It can be said without any exaggeration that this war is the fruit of Soviet influence in Spain», he declared.⁸³⁸

For their part, the Catholic Spanish bishops also recalled the facts in their collective letter of July 1, 1937:

«On February 27, 1936, immediately after the triumph of the Popular Front, the Comintern decreed the revolution in Spain and financed it with exorbitant sums. The following May 1, hundreds of young people demanded publicly at Madrid “bombs, pistols, powder and dynamite for the coming revolution”. On the 16th of the same month, representatives of the USSR met with some Spanish delegates of the Third International at the House of the People in Valencia, and here is the ninth article of their agreement: “To get one of the sectors in Madrid to eliminate political and military figures destined to play an important role in the counter-revolution.” Meanwhile, from Madrid to the most distant cities, the revolutionary militias received military training and were armed to the teeth, so much so that when the war broke out, they numbered 150,000 assault soldiers and 100,000 in the second line.»⁸³⁹

Indeed after March, 1936, Russian ships were constantly unloading arms in Spanish ports, while dozens of technicians of the revolutionary war, the principal ones being Bela Kun and Losovski, arrived at Barcelona with instructions to execute a program, point by point, which would work effectively.⁸⁴⁰

On April 15, the monarchist leader Calvo Sotelo pronounced in the Cortes a long discourse – interrupted by shouts and threats from the Left – in which he presented an implacable indictment of the Popular Front’s innumerable crimes: «Since February 16, a current of fire and blood has blown over Spain.» Then he drew up a frightful account of events.⁸⁴¹

“WE NEED GIGANTIC FLAMES AND WAVES OF BLOOD.” But what can the most eloquent, the most powerful discourses do, before the destructive, barbarous and bloody fury of the Bolsheviks? Between February 16 and May 13 four hundred people were already killed, and more than a thousand were gravely wounded. And that was only a beginning...

At Saragossa, Largo Caballero cried: «We will not leave a stone standing in this Spain which we must destroy before rebuilding it and making it ours.» Margarita Nelken was bold enough to declare this satanic plan to the Cortes:

«We want a revolution, but the Russian revolution cannot serve as a model for us, because we ourselves need to create gigantic flames which can be seen all over the planet, and waves of blood which redden the seas.»⁸⁴²

Meanwhile, Hitler was preparing Germany for war. On March 7, 1936, he brought his troops into the demilitarized Rhineland, while in France the May elections assured the victory of the Popular Front. The French Popular Front then hastened to send arms, planes and men to the Spanish Reds, and were supported by the Christian Democrat intelligentsia of men like Mauriac, Maritain, Mounier, and before long Bernanos.

THE LETTER OF MAY 18, 1936: THE POPE AND RUSSIA, AN IMPORTANT REVELATION

Father Gonçalves was undoubtedly alarmed by the turn of events in Spain. He could see that the prophecy of August, 1931, about «Russia which will spread her errors», was now being fulfilled to the letter. He asked Sister Lucy what should be done. She answered on May 18, in an important letter. We give the integral text here:

IS IT STILL NECESSARY TO INSIST? «... About the other questions, if it will be convenient to insist in order to obtain the consecration of Russia? I answer in almost the same way as I answered the other times. I am sorry that it has not been done yet, but the same God Who asked for it, is the One Who permitted it.

«I am going to say what I feel about it, although it is too delicate a subject to talk about in a letter, due to the danger of it getting lost and being read, but I entrust it to the same God, because I am afraid I have not treated the matter with enough clarity.»

THE PROMISE REMAINS. «If it is convenient to insist? I don't know. It seems to me that if the Holy Father did it right now, God would accept it, and would fulfil His promise; and without any doubt, through this act, the

Holy Father would gladden Our Lord and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»⁸⁴³

THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA: TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY. «Intimately I have spoken to Our Lord about the subject, and not too long ago I asked Him why He would not convert Russia without the Holy Father making that consecration? ***“Because I want My whole Church to acknowledge that consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that it may extend its cult later on, and put the devotion to this Immaculate Heart beside the devotion to My Sacred Heart.”***»

“PRAY VERY MUCH FOR THE HOLY FATHER!” «***“But my God, the Holy Father probably won’t believe me, unless You Yourself move him with a special inspiration.” “The Holy Father! Pray very much for the Holy Father. He will do it, but it will be late!”***»

AN UNCONDITIONAL PROMISE. «***“Nevertheless the Immaculate Heart of Mary will save Russia. It has been entrusted to Her.”***»

FEAR OF ILLUSION... AND YET, CERTITUDE. «Now Father, who will assure me that all this is not a mere illusion? Because of this fear, I have not talked about it to anybody, not even my confessor. I am afraid of deceiving myself and others, which I want to avoid at all cost.»⁸⁴⁴

«You will judge this, and do with it what Our Lord inspires you to do. Believe me, if it were not for the fear of displeasing Our Good Lord because of my lack of clarity and sincerity, I would never have decided to speak so clearly. When I speak intimately with God, I feel His presence to be so real that there is no doubt in my mind, but when I have to communicate it, all I have is fear of illusion.»⁸⁴⁵

«About your visit, I would be very pleased with it because of the spiritual good that it would do me. Maybe Our Lord will arrange it.»

THE REVOLUTION RAISES FEARS FOR THE FUTURE. «Here we are waiting for the day when they will close the house. In that case I suppose they will cancel the decision that I not go to Portugal, at least until they get me a passport to Switzerland or to some other place. The idea of returning

to Portugal mitigates the sacrifice of leaving this house...»

ANSWER TO A QUESTION. «P.S. – About Mexico, Spain and France, you know that they are not included in the promise. We would have to count on the generosity of the Divine mercy...»

A NEW PROMISE FROM BISHOP DA SILVA. «The last time I spoke to the bishop, he promised me that he would take care of this matter (the consecration of Russia), but I don't know if he did.

«I leave everything in the hands of God and in the care of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and I try to work in my field of action, which is sacrifice and prayer.

«Although these are as poor as I, I hope that the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary will accept them, for the conversion of sinners...»⁸⁴⁶

NOW IT IS A QUESTION OF FULFILLING OUR LORD'S DESIRES. Two weeks later, Sister Lucy, who had received an answer from Father Gonçalves, took up her pen once more. She wrote on June 5, 1936:

«I saw by your letter that you are ready to take care of that matter; this gave me great joy, because it seems to me that *Our Lord's wishes are going to be put into effect.*»

Once again she tells her director about the fears which at times torment her:

«To me it seems to be an arrogant pretension to believe or to think that God speaks intimately and familiarly with my soul after so many infidelities.»⁸⁴⁷

But she concludes:

«If, in order to take care of this situation with a greater degree of understanding, you need to use my letters or what I say in them, you have my full consent. You already know that you can discuss anything that you want with my approval, when you talk to the Bishop of Leiria. With other people I feel a certain reluctance, but don't pay any attention to it. If you need to do so, proceed with liberty. As for me, I will overcome these feelings, with God's grace and for His love...»⁸⁴⁸

“FOR THE FUTURE, IT WILL BE AS GOD WILLS!” Meanwhile, the sky grew darker and darker over poor Spain, and the worst was to be expected. Sister Lucy tries to reassure her mother in a letter of June 24, 1936:

«Given the situation in the country we may have to leave; but in this case I will write to you. As long as I have not told you this, do not believe what people will tell you. Up until now, nobody has interfered in our affairs; and for the future it will be as God wills. Do not worry: He watches over us. What more can we desire?»⁸⁴⁹

THE CIVIL WAR (JULY 13, 1936)

“THE GOOD WILL BE MARTYRED...” On July 11, Calvo Sotelo pronounced once more at the Cortes a devastating indictment of the government. *La Pasionaria*, the communist deputy from Asturias, rose to her feet and shouted: «This man has spoken for the last time!»

The prophecy had been easy to make. Dolores Ibaruri had only been informed of what was already planned. The death of the monarchist leader had already been decided on and the government was aware of it. José Calvo Sotelo had been born at Tuy in Galicia. A lawyer, university professor, and deputy to the Cortes, in 1921, at the age of twenty-eight, he was appointed the civil governor of Valencia. In December of 1925, he became an assistant of Primo de Rivera, and he remained at this post successfully for five years. In France, during the years 1930-1934, he had read Bainville and Maurras. After his return to Spain, he was the most farsighted member of the opposition at the Cortes, the most resolute opponent of the communist revolution. He was the enemy to beat. He knew it. His execution was not long in coming.

A remarkable coincidence is that it took place on the same day that, in Her great Secret, Our Lady of Fatima had prophesied this terrible Bolshevik incendiary, against which Calvo Sotelo had dared to stand up with heroic courage: «Russia will spread her errors, causing wars and persecutions. *The good will be martyred...*»

On July 13, at three o'clock in the morning, Calvo Sotelo was arrested at his home by a team of assault troops. They shot him and brought his body, in the small hours of the morning, to the guardian of the eastern cemetery. Since the

government had refused to allow his body to be brought back to its domicile, his body lay in state in the morgue from the afternoon of the thirteenth to the morning of the fourteenth, while an emotional and indignant crowd paid their respects to the first martyr of the Catholic counter-revolution, who left a widow and four children behind, of whom the oldest was only seventeen. As a Franciscan tertiary, he was clothed in the habit of the order. His hands were crossed upon a crucifix draped with a ribbon with the monarchist colours. Mr. Goicoechea, the leader of the *Renovacion Espanola*, pronounced the briefest and the most poignant of discourses:

«I do not promise to pray for you, *I ask you to pray for us*. Before God, who is listening to us, I promise you *to imitate your example* and avenge your death. Our mission is *to save Spain*, and we will save it.»⁸⁵⁰

The promise was kept. The revolution had suppressed Calvo Sotelo because at the Cortes he was the prestigious leader, the unquestioned head of the national and Catholic counter-revolution. His martyrdom was the signal for the military uprising: on July 18, another leader of the same calibre, Francisco Franco, resolutely took the reins.⁸⁵¹

THE STAKES OF THE STRUGGLE: A FORMIDABLE BATTLE AGAINST BOLSHEVISM AND ITS ACCOMPLICES

Catholic Spain arose *in extremis* against Moscow's domination. As Salazar explained at that very moment: «The civil war in Spain is *an international war declared by Russia. On the peninsula, communism has initiated a formidable battle on whose outcome, to a great extent, depends the fate of Europe.*»⁸⁵²

«At the outbreak of hostilities, Largo Caballero had concluded a secret treaty of alliance with the Jewish ambassador of the Soviets, Rosenberg.»⁸⁵³ It is this same Rosenberg, who with his dozens of Soviet agents, directed the republican policy at Madrid. In the Red Army, even before the international brigades entered, Russian influence was preponderant. The USSR furnished arms, officers, and instructors.

But the active complicity of the liberal and Masonic democracies also greatly assisted the Spanish revolutionaries. Already in 1936, with great foresight General Franco denounced this collusion of international Masonry with

Bolshevism, who were both in league against Catholic Spain:

«Freemasonry, with its international influence network, which runs from rue Cadet (at Paris) to Geneva and Prague, *was the principal cause of Spain's ruin.*

«In the fall of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, in the future of the Republic, in the revolution of Asturias, the coup d'état at Barcelona, the destitution of the radical-pacifist government, the electoral victory of February 16, the assassination of Calvo Sotelo – on orders emanating from Geneva and brought by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the freemason Barcia – in the civil war and still today in the propositions of non-intervention, *the influence of freemasonry is felt heavily.*

«This is because Masonry, especially that of Russia, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Mexico, is in solidarity with the Red communist elements, as is shown by a sympathy message sent to Spanish Masonry by the Grand Orient of France, meeting at Paris last September 21.»⁸⁵⁴

It must be said that Spanish Masonry had officially declared itself «completely and absolutely on the side of the Popular Front and the “legitimate government” against “fascism”». ⁸⁵⁵

The Crusade against such formidable opposing forces was to last thirty months. It was a hard, heroic struggle. Franco conducted it as prudently as he did energetically. Thanks to the rapid and firm support of Rome and the Spanish bishops, it ended in victory.

ROME LEARNS ITS LESSONS FROM THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

From the beginning of 1936, the Pope and his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, had perceived the gravity of the situation. The destructive fury of the Reds against everything relating to God, to Christ and the Church sufficiently demonstrated what satanic hatred had spawned this revolution.

From this moment on, the aging Pope, fully conscious of the peril which was now at the doors, was issuing continual warnings against Bolshevism. Thus on May 12, 1936, speaking to journalists, he said:

«The primary peril, the greatest one and the most widespread is certainly communism under all its forms and in all its degrees, for it threatens everything, takes possession of everything, and infiltrates everywhere, overtly or secretly.»

After having denounced «the unbelievable connivance or at the very least the silence and tolerance which are an inestimable advantage for the cause of evil, and which have the most disastrous consequences for the cause of good», the Pope continued: «You will tell people, most beloved Sons, that you have seen the common Father of all the faithful, the Vicar of Christ, profoundly preoccupied and afflicted by this immense peril threatening the world and which is producing very grave devastation in several regions, and most especially in the European world.

«You will tell people, most beloved Sons, that the common Father does not cease to point out the peril which many, too many, seem to ignore, or whose gravity and immensity they do not want to recognize.»

The time has passed for attempted compromises and vain hopes for an understanding with Moscow. Rome had turned over a new leaf. The Pope concluded his allocation with these grave words:

«Remain with us, Lord; a sombre twilight which seems to herald an even darker night is spreading over the whole world; remain with us, and Your light will shine over us and guide us even in the darkness.»⁸⁵⁶

THE POPE BLESSES FRANCO'S CRUSADE. Even more important was the audience of September 14, 1936. At Castelgandolfo, the Pope received a group of Spanish refugees presented by Cardinal Pacelli. During a long allocution the Pope insisted on the necessity of learning the lessons of the Spanish Civil War:

«But the facts which your presence, most dear Children, recalls to mind and demonstrates, are not only an alarming series of destruction and carnage, they are also *a school teaching grave lessons for Europe and for the whole world.*

«For a world which is now entirely overrun, inundated and shaken by subversive propaganda, and especially in Europe, which is so profoundly troubled and shaken at the present hour, the sad events in Spain announce

and foretell once more what extreme disasters threaten the foundations of all order, all culture and all civilizations.»

Most significantly, at the end of his discourse, the Pope dared to bless General Franco's Crusade publicly:

«... Our blessing goes out in a special manner to all those who have assumed the difficult and perilous task of defending and restoring the rights and honour of God and religion...»⁸⁵⁷

These brief words, pronounced barely two months after the beginning of the nationalist uprising, were decisively important. It would not even be excessive to say that they saved Spain. For the defence of religion was the principal motive of the uprising – we must be careful not to forget it, even if the majority of historians hardly mention the fact. After it was launched, it was again this unanimous Catholic Faith which formed a unity out of various political movements of such diverse inspiration, that participated in this new *Reconquista*. This is the reason the Pope's words were so important. If, as in the case of Mexico in 1929, the Pope had attempted to find a compromise with the Reds and condemned the Crusade, it would have been the end of Catholic Spain. Russia would have quickly transformed it into a Soviet colony, and a formidable springboard for the conquest of Europe, beginning with Portugal.

In other words, political history shows what the message of Fatima demonstrates on the supernatural level: the decisive role of the Holy Father in the defence of Christendom and world peace.

THE SPANISH BISHOPS PREACH THE CRUSADE. Once the Pope had spoken, the Spanish bishops were able to distribute pastoral letters which, by providing a theological and moral justification, brought an invaluable assistance to the nationalist movement.

On September 30, 1936, Bishop Pla y Denial of Salamanca published a pastoral letter on «The Two Cities». But it was especially Cardinal Goma, the Archbishop of Toledo, who became the spokesman of the Church in Spain. In November of 1936, he furnished the most reasoned and complete justification for the Crusade.⁸⁵⁸ In December of 1936, the Cardinal was already unofficially representing the Vatican in the provisional government of Franco.

In his radio message of Christmas 1936, the Pope made a point of bringing up the war in Spain once more. The message was given from his bed, to which the Pope was confined by sickness.

«... A new warning, perhaps the gravest and the most menacing there has ever been for the whole world, and principally for Europe and for Christian civilization, a terrifying revelation and presage, in its certitude and evidence, of what is being prepared for Europe and for the whole world, if immediate and effective recourse is not had to a defence and a remedy.»⁸⁵⁹

It must be stated that in six months the persecution had been so violent that ten Spanish bishops, hundreds of religious and seminarians, and already over five thousand priests had shed their blood for the Faith, while thousands of churches had been burned down or destroyed.

AT PONTEVEDRA: «WE HAVE PASSED THROUGH WATER AND FIRE»

Although Catholic Galicia was one of the regions having the least to suffer from the civil war, the first days of the confrontation in July of 1936 were not without peril. Father Alonso reports:

«Lucy, with her community, spent hours of real fright, which is reflected in the house diaries and the correspondence of the time. At Pontevedra, the revolutionary militia first took hold of the city, and then they menacingly presented themselves before the artillery barracks. On July 20, great masses of *campesinos* concentrated in the city», coming from neighbouring cities.

«At Tuy, on July 18, the revolutionaries captured the street and the episcopal palace was assailed.

«And thus things remained between uncertainty and terror, until on July 26 the (nationalist) forces of Pontevedra and Orense liberated the city. Finally, Pontevedra was delivered from fear.»⁸⁶⁰

Sister Lucy disclosed, undoubtedly to her confessor, what her intimate sentiments had been during this anguishing trial:

«In spite of the proximity of so many tempests and dangers, the Good Lord watched over my Sisters, so that we can say that we passed through water

and through fire, and that we came out safe and well. Thanks to God, up to the present, we still have had nothing more to suffer than a little fear.

«In truth, I was not worried for a moment, partly because of the trust I had in the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and the joy I felt at going to be united with them in Heaven. But it really seems to me that They did not want me there now. They want me to offer sacrifices to Them and wait for the conversion of this nation. And I was not frightened, partly also, perhaps, because of ignorance of the extent of the peril we were in.

«Now we are in the midst of waiting for what will happen. We entrust ourselves to Our Lord, to the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who will soon grant us days of peace and tranquillity. If this is not the case, I am ready. And nothing would be more pleasing to me than to give my life for God, so as to repay Him in some way for giving His life for me; I recognize, however, that I am unworthy of so great a favour.»⁸⁶¹

But martyrdom was not to be our seer's vocation. Her mission was not over yet. While continuing to insist, to pray and to sacrifice herself, she was soon to obtain from her bishop a decisive initiative with the Holy See.

III. BISHOP DA SILVA ASKS THE HOLY FATHER FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA (1937)

THE LETTER OF MARCH 1937

Indeed the insistence of Sister Lucy, seconded by Father Gonçalves,⁸⁶² and perhaps also the fearsome gravity of events in Spain, finally got the Bishop of Leiria to make up his mind. Overcoming his fears, he moved from promises to action.

In March of 1937, he himself wrote to the Holy Father to pass on to him the request for the consecration of Russia. We have a copy of this decisively important document written by Father Gonçalves. This undoubtedly manifests the leading role he played in this final initiative with Pius XI. Here is the integral text of the letter, to which we add some subtitles:

«Most Holy Father,

«Humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, I believe it my duty to explain the following to Your Holiness.

«There exists in this diocese the sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima, which is the greatest centre of piety in Portugal, devotion to which has spread in many nations.»

THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA AND COMMUNISM. «According to the recommendations made by the Most Holy Virgin in 1917, especially concerning devotion to the holy Rosary, the struggle against impurity and penance, we see that Our Lady was preparing the struggle against communism, from which Portugal has so far been preserved, in spite of its nearness to Spain.»

“THE ANTI-COMMUNIST VOW OF 1936.” «Last year, we, the Portuguese bishops, promised after the retreat we had made in the sanctuary to organize a great national pilgrimage, if at the end of the year 1937, the terrible calamity of communism had still not invaded our country. Thanks to the Most Holy Virgin, we are still at peace.»

HEAVEN’S REQUESTS. «Of the three children to whom Our Lady appeared, two are dead and the surviving one is a religious in the Institute of Saint Dorothy in Spain.

«This religious asks me to communicate to Your Holiness that according to a revelation from Heaven, the Good Lord promises to end the persecution in Russia, if Your Holiness deigns to make, and order all the bishops of the Catholic world equally to make, a public and solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and also deigns to approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion.

«It consists in this: During five months in a row to receive Holy Communion on the first Saturday, recite the Rosary, and keep Our Lady company for fifteen minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary.

«This devotion has for its purpose:

1) To make reparation for the blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception, virginity and maternity of the Most Holy Virgin, and also outrages against the images of Our Lady.

2) To pray for children in whose hearts scorn and even hatred against our Heavenly Mother is being sown.

«This, Most Holy Father, is the communication which I received to pass on to Your Holiness. In our pilgrimages to the Sanctuary, we always pray for Your Holiness. Finally, I humbly ask Your Holiness for his apostolic blessing for this diocese, its humble Pastor, and the pilgrims of Our Lady of Fatima's sanctuary.»⁸⁶³

We might point out that although the letter is very brief, all of Our Lady's requests are expressed with perfect exactitude, using word-for-word expressions of Sister Lucy.

Father Alonso reports that **«*the document was received at Rome at the end of March, 1937. On April 8, the Holy See acknowledged receiving it.*»**⁸⁶⁴

THE MOST OPPORTUNE MOMENT: «DIVINI REDEMPTORIS» (MARCH 19, 1937)

Through a happy combination of circumstances, Bishop da Silva's request reached the Holy Father at the most opportune moment. Two weeks earlier he had been about to publish *Divini Redemptoris*, his magisterial encyclical against communism.

This time all the misdeeds, all the abominable crimes of atheistic and godless communism, which he called «*barbarous*», «*intrinsically perverse*» and «*diabolical*», were methodically exposed and condemned with authority. The tragic persecutions in Russia, Mexico and Spain were recalled and indignantly denounced. Russia was mentioned several times, and it was «*communism directed by Moscow*» which was meant. The hatred, barbarity and unbelievable Bolshevik savagery, far from being able to be presented and excused as accidental excesses, the Pope explained, «are *the natural fruits* of a system which is lacking all interior restraint».

Finally, the insidious manoeuvre of «the hand outstretched to Christians», was unmasked and vigorously reprovved. Recovering the farsightedness and the firm tone of a Saint Pius X condemning Modernism or the Christian Democracy of the Sillon, Pope Pius XI wrote:

«On this point (the ruses and deceit used by communists) We have already insisted in Our Allocution of May 12th of last year, but We believe it to be a duty of special urgency, Venerable Brethren, to call your attention to it once again.

«In the beginning communism showed itself for what it was, thus alienating the people. It has therefore changed its tactics, and strives to entice the multitudes by trickery of various forms, hiding its real designs behind ideas that in themselves are good and attractive. Thus, aware of the universal desire for peace, the leaders of communism pretend to be the most zealous promoters and propagandists in the movement for world amity. Yet at the same time they stir up a class-warfare which causes rivers of blood to flow, and, realizing that their system offers no internal guarantee of peace, they have recourse to unlimited armaments. Under various names which do not suggest communism, they establish organizations and periodicals with the sole purpose of carrying their ideas into quarters otherwise inaccessible. They try perfidiously to worm their way even into professedly Catholic and religious organizations.

«Again, without receding an inch from their subversive principles, they invite Catholics to collaborate with them in the realm of so-called humanitarianism and charity; and at times even make proposals that are in perfect harmony with the Christian spirit and the doctrine of the Church.

«Elsewhere they carry their hypocrisy so far as to encourage the belief that communism, in countries where faith and culture are more strongly entrenched, will assume another and much milder form. It will not interfere with the practice of religion. It will respect liberty of conscience. There are some even who refer to certain changes recently introduced into Soviet legislation as a proof that communism is about to abandon its program of war against God.

«See to it, Venerable Brethren, that the Faithful do not allow themselves to be deceived! *Communism is intrinsically perverse, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever.* Those who permit themselves to be deceived into lending their aid towards the triumph of communism in their own country, will be the first to fall victims of their error. And the greater the antiquity and grandeur of the Christian civilization in the regions where communism successfully penetrates, so much more devastating will be the hatred displayed by the Godless.

«But “unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.” And so,

as a final and most efficacious remedy, We recommend, Venerable Brethren, that in your dioceses you use the most practical means to foster and intensify *the spirit of prayer joined with Christian penance*. When the apostles asked the Saviour why they had been unable to drive the evil spirit from a demoniac, Our Lord answered: “This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.” So, too, *the evil which today torments humanity can be conquered only by a worldwide holy crusade of prayer and penance*. We ask especially the contemplative orders, men and women, to redouble their prayers and sacrifices to obtain from Heaven efficacious aid for the Church in the present struggle. Let them implore also *the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Virgin* who, having crushed the head of the serpent of old, remains the sure protectress and invincible “Help of Christians”.»⁸⁶⁵

The Sovereign Pontiff’s solemn judgment on Bolshevism now corresponded to the one implied by the great Secret and the requests of Our Lady of Fatima. Communism is «*a satanic scourge*» – the expression again comes from Pius XI – and to oppose it, it must be resisted head on, without seeking the slightest compromise. Compromise between Marxism and the Church is as impossible as compromise between Christ and Belial (2 Cor. 6:15). Christians must insistently implore from Heaven the extraordinary aid of the Immaculate Mediatrix, who alone is capable of delivering the world from this deadly, terribly contagious pest.

Granted, there is room for regret in that this magisterial judgment on the major peril of his entire pontificate came so late. The Pope was already over eighty and had reigned for fifteen years. He had already published twenty-six encyclicals. As yet none of them had expressly and solemnly dealt with communism, its doctrine, its accomplices and its frightful expansion. The encyclical also came only after frightful slaughters which perhaps could have been avoided, or, as in Spain’s case, at least contribute to the deliverance of the martyred peoples from the yoke of their persecutors.

However, better late than never. This condemnation continues to be a turning point in the history of the Church. Like *Quas Primas*, the encyclical on the Kingship of Christ, it was destined to become buried since 1960 in the same “dark well” of silence and oblivion into which our Pastors had resolved to cast the whole doctrinal legacy of Saint Pius X, along with the Secret of Fatima.

THE COLLECTIVE LETTER OF THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE TO THE BISHOPS OF THE WHOLE WORLD

On July 1, 1937, three months after *Divini Redemptoris*, the Spanish bishops published a long document addressed to all their colleagues of the entire world. In the spirit of the pastoral letter by Cardinal Goma – who almost certainly was the principal composer of this remarkable text – the bishops explained with perfect clarity the events which, since 1931, had resulted in civil war. They explained why they supported officially, and without any reservations, the “national movement”, and why Spain’s only hope lay in its triumph.

The demonstration is strong and unassailable. Using the facts, it reduces to dust the gross sophisms, the shameless lies of our “Red Christians”, who were carried away by their passion for democracy. Under the fallacious pretext that “the White terror” reigned in nationalist Spain, they dared to betray their brethren, preferring the Red persecutors to the millions of persecuted Catholics. The bishops re-established the truth:

«Each war has its excesses; the national movement will have some of its own; nobody can serenely defend himself *against the attacks of a furious enemy*.» And at all events, the bishops insisted, «we affirm that there is an enormous, unbridgeable gap between the two parties, in what concerns the principles of justice and the way it is administered.»

No, in all honesty, the two sides cannot even be compared.

“THE GOOD WILL BE MARTYRED.” Using this document, which although little known is of capital importance for understanding the war in Spain, let us cite finally the terrible statistics after just one year of Bolshevik terror:

«Although the figures are still pending, we can estimate that almost twenty thousand churches were destroyed or completely looted.

«The number of priests assassinated (about 40% in the devastated dioceses, and 80% in some of them) is as high as six thousand for the secular clergy alone. They were hunted down with dogs, they were followed across mountains, they were relentlessly tracked down in all possible hiding places. They were killed without a trial, usually right on the spot, with no other reason than their social function as priests.

«This revolution was supremely cruel. The massacring took on the forms of a horrible barbarism. As far as the number is concerned, it is calculated at over three hundred thousand – lay people who perished through assassination, solely for their political ideas and particularly their religious ones. At Madrid alone, during the first three months, more than twenty-two thousand of these were executed.⁸⁶⁶ Practically no village exists in which the most well-known figures of the Right have not been eliminated.»

The bishops then show to what extent this revolution was «inhuman», «barbarous», iconoclastic, «essentially anti-Spanish», and above all, they continue, «anti-Christian»:

«... We do not believe that in the whole history of Christianity, and in so few weeks' time, there has been such an explosion of hatred against Jesus Christ and His holy religion...

«The martyrs are numbered in the thousands; the witness they gave is a source of hope for our poor homeland; but in the Roman Martyrology we perhaps would not find one form of martyrdom not employed by the communists, not excepting crucifixion...

«... The hatred against Jesus Christ and Our Lady has reached the point of paroxysm. One can imagine the hatred of hell becoming incarnate in our unfortunate communists by the hundreds of mutilated crucifixes, by the images of Our Lady profaned in bestial fashion, by the posters of Bilbao which blasphemed sacrilegiously against the Mother of God, by the infamous literature of the entrenched Reds, where the divine mysteries are ridiculed by the repeated profanation of the Eucharist.

«... The forms of profanation have been so incredible that they cannot be conceived of without presupposing a diabolical suggestion.»⁸⁶⁷

The bishops concluded by evoking the glorious and innumerable phalanx of their martyrs:

«Remember our assassinated bishops, remember so many priests, religious and eminent lay persons who perished solely because they constituted the chosen militia of Christ, and pray to the Lord to make fruitful the blood of these generous souls. It cannot be said of any of them that they failed at the

hour of their martyrdom; by the thousands they gave the highest example of heroism. Herein lies the forever unfading glory of our Spain.»⁸⁶⁸

The martyrology was established with precision at the end of the war; 13 bishops, 4,317 secular priests, 2,489 religious and 283 nuns and 249 seminarians were massacred out of hatred for their faith.⁸⁶⁹ This letter of the Spanish episcopate had considerable repercussions.⁸⁷⁰

On August 28, 1937, the Vatican recognized the nationalist government *de jure*, and sent a nuncio to Burgos. With wisdom and prudence, striving to spare his compatriots' blood as much as possible, Franco continued the struggle until the Crusade was victorious.

On April 1, 1939, the Red army was conquered and the war against Bolshevism was over. Once more all over Spain bells rang out, calling the faithful to prayer. Claude Martin writes:

«An immense wave of fervour brought soldiers, former prisoners and their families to the foot of the altar. Without any transition, the great Spanish cities returned from Stalin and Bakunin to Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Ignatius of Loyola.»⁸⁷¹

On May 19, at the *Paseo de la Castellana* in Madrid, the Caudillo stood to review his victorious troops. His biographer notes:

«Others, after similar success, posed as demigods. Franco was too Catholic to fall into the temptation of pride... The following day, after a *Te Deum* at the church of Saint Barbara, he laid down his sword before the altar, to thank God for having granted him the victory.

«“Lord accept with kindness the efforts of this people which was always Thine, who with me and in Your Name heroically vanquished the enemy of truth in this century.

«“Lord God, in Your hands reside all right and all power; grant me Thine assistance to lead this people to the full liberty of empire, for Thy glory and that of Thy Church.

«“Grant, Lord, that men may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the

living God.”»⁸⁷²

Spain was saved. But Russia? Europe? The world?

IV. THE ANXIOUS WAIT (APRIL 1937 - JANUARY 1938)

On April 8, 1937, the Vatican acknowledged receiving Bishop da Silva's request. We can guess with what impatience, mingled with anxiety, Sister Lucy must have awaited Rome's response. Would the Pope make the saving decision this time? Would he finally consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary before it was too late?

THE RETURN TO TUY. In the meantime, on April 28, Sister Lucy was summoned to Tuy to see the provincial superior, Mother Monfalim, who was dying. This saintly religious, who had contributed so much to the development of her congregation – consecrated by herself, since 1927, to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary – wanted to have Sister Lucy at her side to assist her in her agony. She died on May 28, 1937, on the feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces.

Sister Lucy, who had believed she was leaving Pontevedra only for a few days, in fact remained at Tuy for several years.⁸⁷³

THE SECOND MEMOIR. On November 7, 1937, Sister Lucy writes: «I take up my pen to do the will of God.» At the request of Bishop da Silva, she had in effect returned to work to write a Second Memoir where she had to outline her own biography. By November 21, she had already completed this task.⁸⁷⁴

THE SECOND REFUSAL OF POPE PIUS XI

Weeks and months passed. Nothing, however, was forthcoming out of Rome. There was no response to Bishop da Silva. There was not even, as with Leo XIII in 1898 or Pius XII in 1952, the designation of a theologian with the task of investigating more thoroughly the nature and credibility of the divine revelations passed on to them. Nothing came of it. The terrible lessons «of the Red triangle of terror and blood», as Pius XI himself said to designate Russia, Mexico and Spain, had led him to resolutely change his attitude towards Bolshevism; but

they were not enough to make him decide to pay attention to the requests of Our Lady of Fatima.

On September 29, 1937, he had published the encyclical *Ingravescentibus Malis*, on the holy Rosary. «Although so many and such great evils threaten us, and although we have to fear even greater ones for the future, we must not lose courage», wrote the Pope. He then invited the faithful to have recourse to Our Lady's mediation through the recitation of the Rosary. Then he developed the traditional themes on the subject. He evoked the grave errors and peril of communism, and strongly recommended the Christian people to address urgent prayers «to obtain from the powerful Mother of God the defeat of the destroyers of Christian and human civilization... and that the waves of the tempest pull back, subside, and calm down...»

Unfortunately, the Pope went no further. He brought up the apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes and Her recommendation to pray the Rosary. But he said nothing about Fatima, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, or the consecration of Russia. He was, so to speak, content with a simple routine exhortation. Clearly, he stood by his refusal of 1931.

This encyclical was the only one that Pius XI expressly devoted to devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. It was also the last encyclical of his long pontificate.⁸⁷⁵ On the note of this sad and terrible refusal, the year 1938 was to open.

APPENDIX - SISTER LUCY RELATES THE EVENTS OF FATIMA THE FIRST TWO MEMOIRS (1935 - 1937)

SEPTEMBER 12, 1935: THE TRANSFER OF JACINTA'S MORTAL REMAINS TO FATIMA



We have already described in what circumstances Jacinta's body was buried at Vila Nova de Ourem, in the Baron of Alvaiazere's family vault.⁸⁷⁶ In 1935, in spite of the baron's pleas,⁸⁷⁷ Bishop da Silva decided to transfer the seer's mortal remains to the cemetery of Fatima, in a tomb specially prepared for her and her brother Francisco. The ceremony took place on September 12.⁸⁷⁸

Before her body was taken away, her leaden coffin was opened and all those present – the Baron of Alvaiazere and his son, Father Venancio (the future Bishop of Fatima), Father Louis Fischer, Jacinta's family, some ladies, civil servants and some undertakers – could observe to their astonishment that Jacinta's face was perfectly intact. A photograph was taken. A few days later, Bishop da Silva made the delicate gesture of sending Sister Lucy a copy of the moving photograph.

«MY MOST INTIMATE CHILDHOOD FRIEND»

On November 17, Sister Lucy took up her pen to send her bishop a warm thanks:

«I thank you and am most grateful to you for the photographs you sent. I cannot tell you how I treasure them. I particularly like the one of Jacinta so much that even over the photograph I would like to tear away the linens covering her, so as to see her entirely. It was as though I were impatient to uncover her face, without even realizing that it was an image.

«I was half in ecstasy, so great was my joy at seeing my childhood friend once

more. I hope that the Lord will grant her the halo of the saints, for the glory of His Most Holy Mother. She was a child only in age. Already she knew how to practice virtue and show her love for God and the Most Holy Virgin through the practice of sacrifice.

«To her company I partly owe the preservation of my innocence. She had admirably understood the spirit of prayer and sacrifice as Our Lady requested it of us.» Sister Lucy goes on to cite several examples which we have already seen in the accounts of her Memoirs. «For these and innumerable other motives, I have great esteem for her sanctity.»⁸⁷⁹

THE FIRST MEMOIR: A BIOGRAPHY OF JACINTA (DECEMBER 1935)

After reading this letter, where Sister Lucy showed in her enthusiasm and holy affection for her cousin that she had many childhood memories to recall, Bishop da Silva straightaway had the happy idea of ordering the seer to write a biography of Jacinta. Sister Lucy began the task in the second week of December 1935:

«Most Reverend Excellency,

«Having implored the protection of the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, our tender Mother, and sought light and grace at the foot of the Tabernacle, so as to write nothing that would not be solely and exclusively for the glory of Jesus and of the most Blessed Virgin, I now take up this work, in spite of the repugnance I feel, since I can say almost nothing about Jacinta without speaking either directly or indirectly about my miserable self. I obey, nevertheless, the will of Your Excellency, which, for me, is the expression of the will of our good God. I begin this task, then, asking the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary to deign to bless it, and to make use of this act of obedience to obtain the conversion of poor sinners, for whom Jacinta so generously sacrificed herself.

«... Having no free time at my disposal, I must make the most of the hours when we work in silence, to recall and jot down, with the aid of paper and pencil which I keep hidden under my sewing, all that the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary want me to remember.»

Two weeks later, in spite of such unfavourable conditions, Sister Lucy had

already almost completed her work: she had written thirty-nine pages of thirty lines each, on notebook paper. The portrait of Jacinta is retraced with such psychological finesse and precision of recollection – of her conversations and attitudes – that the little seer seems to come to life before our eyes, discreetly revealing to us the double secret with which her heart burned: her love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary and her resolve to save sinners.

On Christmas day Lucy finished her account:

«And now, I have finished telling Your Excellency what I remember about Jacinta's life. I ask our Good God to deign to accept this act of obedience, that it may kindle in souls a fire of love for the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.»⁸⁸⁰

MAY 1936: AN UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENT

On May 13, 1936, perhaps at the request of Father Gonçalves, Sister Lucy began writing a new work which was extremely important in the gradual revelation of the secret themes of the Fatima message. Undoubtedly for the first time, she described in detail the apparitions of the Angel, and then the apparitions of Our Lady in 1917, quoting the words of Our Lady which until then had remained secret. She revealed the apparition of August 26, 1923, at Asilo de Vilar, and finally gave a complete account of the vision of June 13, 1929, as well as the divine communication of August 1931. She also made a list of the most important dates in her life.

However, it seems that this document, which was so new and important, was not used by Fatima historians before the writing of Sister Lucy's last three Memoirs, which give the substance of it.⁸⁸¹

THE SECOND MEMOIR: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY (NOVEMBER 1937)

Father da Fonseca had had the privilege of seeing Sister Lucy's first notebook. After reading this Memoir, he wrote to Bishop da Silva in April 1937:

«The letter of Sister Dores (Lucy) on Jacinta leads me to believe that there are still more interesting details concerning the history of the Apparitions (words or communications of Our Lady, acts of virtue by the children in obedience to Our Lady's indications...) which are still unpublished. Would it not be possible, or

would there be any obstacle to asking Sister Lucy to write in detail everything she remembers, in all religious and evangelical simplicity, in honour of Our Lady?»

A few months later Bishop da Silva, after having obtained the permission of the Mother Provincial, Mother Maria do Carmo Corte Real, ordered Sister Lucy to complete the first account of her recollections, this time describing her own life and the 1917 apparitions.

On November 7, 1937, she began the writing of her text with these admirable words:

«Here I am, pen in hand, ready to do the will of my God. Since I have no other aim but this, I begin with the maxim which my holy Foundress has handed down to me, and which, after her example, I shall repeat many times in the course of this account: “*O Will of God, You are my paradise!*” Allow me, Your Excellency, to sound the depths contained in this maxim. Whenever repugnance or love for my secret makes me want to keep some things hidden, then this maxim will be my norm and my guide.

«I had a mind to ask what use there could possibly be in my writing an account like this, since even my handwriting is scarcely presentable, but I am asking nothing. I know that the perfection of obedience asks for no reasons. Your Excellency’s words are enough for me, since they assure me that *this is for the glory of our Blessed Mother in Heaven*. In the certainty that it is so, I implore the blessing and protection of Her Immaculate Heart and, humbly prostrate at Her feet, I use Her own most holy words and speak to my God: “I, the least of your handmaids, O my God, now come in full submission to Your most holy Will, to lift the veil from my secret, and reveal the story of Fatima just as it is. No longer will I savour the joy of sharing with You alone the secrets of Your love; but henceforth, others too, will sing with me the greatness of Your mercy.”»⁸⁸²

This writing, which was begun on November 7, was completed on the 21st. Once again Sister Lucy had taken only two weeks to write this long Memoir, having only a little spare time from her domestic chores in which to do it. Father Alonso writes: «It is a question of a twenty-three page work, written on both sides. The handwriting is closely packed and continuous, without erasures. This shows once again the lucidity of mind, serenity of soul and equilibrium of Sister Lucy’s faculties.»⁸⁸³

Again, let us quote the epilogue of this text:

«I think, Your Excellency, that I have just picked the most beautiful flower and the most delicious fruit from my little garden, and I now place it in the merciful hands of the good Lord, whom you represent, praying that He will make it yield a plentiful harvest of souls for eternal life. And since Our Dear Lord takes pleasure in the humble obedience of the least of His creatures, I end with the words of Her whom He, in His infinite mercy, has given me as Mother, Protectress and Model, the very same words with which I began: “*Behold the handmaid of the Lord! May He continue to make use of her as He thinks best!*”»⁸⁸⁴

CHAPTER X

«THE WAR PREDICTED IS IMMINENT... IT WILL BE HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE!» (JANUARY 1938 - SEPTEMBER 1939)

On the morning of Wednesday, January 26, 1938, articles of this nature could be read in the newspapers:

«An aurora borealis of exceptional size furrowed the sky of Western Europe last night; it caused an uproar in a number of departments, which at first believed it to be a *gigantic fire*.

«In the entire region of the Alps, the population was very much intrigued by this strange spectacle. *The sky was ablaze like an immense moving furnace, provoking a very strong blood-red glow.* The edge of the furnace was white, as if the sun was about to come up. It was undoubtedly an aurora borealis, but an exceptionally vast one, according to Professor Pers, of the Faculty of Sciences at Grenoble.»⁸⁸⁵

I. «WHEN YOU SEE A NIGHT ILLUMINED BY AN UNKNOWN LIGHT...» (JANUARY 25-26, 1938)

In this astonishing spectacle which she was able to watch at Tuy with her companions, Sister Lucy recognized the event predicted twenty years earlier by Our Lady of Fatima, in Her great Secret of July 13, 1917. This spectacular and most unusual atmospheric phenomenon was the sign of the divine chastisement which was now imminent. Our Lady had predicted:

«The war is going to end. But if men do not cease offending God... another worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI... Russia will spread its errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions against the Church...

«When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign given you by God that He is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions against the Church

*and the Holy Father...»*⁸⁸⁶

A Portuguese author, G. Freire, assures us that immediately after January 25, Sister Lucy explained to her bishop, to Canon Galamba, her Provincial Superior and her confessors the supernatural and prophetic significance of the atmospheric phenomenon which all had been able to see, and which the press had spoken about at length.⁸⁸⁷ Speaking to her bishop, Sister Lucy wrote in her Third Memoir on August 31, 1941:

«Your Excellency is not unaware that, a few years ago, God manifested that sign, which astronomers chose to call an aurora borealis. I don't know for certain, but I think if they investigated the matter, they would discover that, in the form in which it appeared, it could not possibly have been an aurora borealis. Be that as it may, God made use of this to make me understand that His justice was about to strike the guilty nations...»⁸⁸⁸

Of course this declaration of Sister Lucy caused a good deal of ink to flow. Following Father Dhanis, all the adversaries of Fatima seized upon these words to underline the seer's error in any way they could. Was she not presenting as a miracle what in reality, they tell us, was just an ordinary aurora borealis?

«A NIGHT ILLUMINED BY AN UNKNOWN LIGHT»

Our critics should at least point out, in all honesty, the prudent expressions used by Sister Lucy. She does not endeavour to impose her opinion categorically, but merely contents herself with expressing a personal view. This reserve must be stressed: «*I don't know*», she says, «*but it seems to me that...*» And further on: «*Be that as it may*» on the nature of this phenomenon, etc. Unfortunately, this text is not sufficiently explicit to allow us to guess the motives for Sister Lucy's statement. We may hope that the interrogations by Father Alonso may finally shed all the desired light on this point, for when Father Jongen⁸⁸⁹ had asked the seer why, in her opinion, she had written that the phenomenon of January 25, 1938, was not an aurora borealis, she simply answered: «Because I don't think it was.» It did not occur to the interrogator to insist. What a terrible shame! For if she dared to speak in this way, the ever circumspect Sister Lucy undoubtedly had solid personal reasons. But what were they? Will we perhaps learn one day?

Meanwhile, we stick to the exact words of the great Secret. What do they tell us?

«When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign given you by God...» Let it be clearly understood that there is no question of a miracle here. On that very same July 13, 1917, Our Lady had announced: «In October, *I will work a miracle* so that all may see and believe.» But She did not say: “I will work a great miracle to warn mankind of the imminence of the chastisement.” It would be an error, then, to put the unusual phenomenon of January 25, 1938, in the same class as the great miracle of the dance of the sun on October 13, 1917. In an appendix to this chapter, we will show how on closer examination the expression of the great Secret, even from the scientific point of view, appears as the most precise and exact one to designate this baffling and mysterious natural phenomenon. For the astronomers do not always know where this mysterious, nocturnal light that provokes what we generally call an “aurora borealis” comes from... but let us repeat that this does not mean that it is miraculous.

«*THE GREAT SIGN GIVEN YOU BY GOD...*»

No, it is a question of something entirely different. It is not a miracle which proves the authenticity of the apparitions and the message, but only *an extraordinary natural phenomenon* which, having been promised in advance, can serve as the sign and the final warning announcing that the chastisement is imminent: «Know that it is *the great sign given you by God* that He is about to punish the world...»

In this sense, the extraordinarily vast aurora borealis was not a banal natural phenomenon, like an eclipse or the passage of a meteor. Of themselves such phenomena have no objective significance. The Creator, who by His Providence governs both the elements of the world and the course of human history, had given it a meaning. The very nature of the great aurora borealis lent itself so objectively to this meaning that, even being completely ignorant of the prophecy, both the simple and the learned who had enough intelligence to read the great book of nature could see the supernatural significance of the great atmospheric phenomenon.

Having supplied these comments by way of clarification, we must now let the witnesses speak. They themselves will reveal to us how eloquent the event was. Indeed, nothing more eloquent and expressive could be imagined to give men a preview of the chastisement which threatened them: a horrible war, the deadliest

one in all of history, which would cause torrents *of blood* to flow; a world war which would set the world ablaze *like a great conflagration*, giving light everywhere by its red, destructive flames. Finally, it was a war satanically willed and prepared by the forces of antichrist Judeo-Masonry and its accomplice, Stalinist Bolshevism. Its only consequence was to hurl upon the world *a red wave of blood and fire* originating with atheistic, godless and destructive communism. For in the final analysis it is this interminable war – interminable because it is constantly being kindled again on every continent – through which Russia is little by little managing to enslave the world. This is the meaning of the terrible *universal conflagration* which the disturbing *red glow* of January 25, 1938, announced and prefigured, and of which it gave a foretaste.

What a pity that through the negligence of the Pastors of the Church, the spiritual meaning of this unusual conflagration which illumined this winter night was not revealed to the faithful while there was still time to do something about it! Not having been willing to fulfil Heaven's requests, the pastors were not any more disturbed by this great prophetic Secret, mercifully offered to humanity as an effective instrument to stir up repentance and lead people to conversion. At least let us hear the statements of the witnesses. Even today, do they not remind us of past catastrophes and the tragic events threatening us?

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE WITNESSES

We have before our eyes a voluminous dossier which a friend enjoying competence in the matter was kind enough to prepare for us. Let us first survey the fifty pages of a detailed account which appeared in the "Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of France and Monthly Review of Astronomy, Meteorology and Globular Physics", in the year 1938.⁸⁹⁰

«An aurora borealis of exceptional beauty was visible in France and in almost all the countries of Europe, from the evening of Tuesday, January 25, 1938, to the morning of Wednesday, the 26th. In Switzerland, in England as well as in the regions of the West, Southwest and Southeast, right down to Provence, and even further south, in Italy and Portugal, in Sicily and Gibraltar, and even in North Africa, the phenomenon showed an exceptional intensity for these latitudes...

«The atmosphere had been cloudy and there had even been a slight drizzle

around dusk. The sun had been invisible all day. But now, more than two hours after sunset, the clouds are dispelled. The northeast, northern and northwest horizons light up as though dawn were going to break all over again. For practical purposes it is dawn... but a nocturnal dawn, with a strange light; it is the aurora borealis.

«A pale, beautiful, greenish-blue light envelops the sky from northeast to northwest. Gradually, up above *the sky turns fiery red and an irregular red arch appears. A sort of cloud tinged with purple* condenses in the northeast and moves over towards the northwest, as if propelled by a mysterious breath. It folds over, undulates, dilates, vanishes and then reappears, while immense rays, whose colour passes from *blood-red* to orange-red to yellow, rise up to the zenith of the sky, enveloping the stars. The spectacle is enchanting and varied, animated with luminous palpitations, with extinctions and recrudescences.»

«... In the streets there is panic. “*Paris is on fire!*” In several villages of the province firemen are mobilized...» «An immense *blood-red glow* was extending over the sky...» (p. 43, 49-50).

The review then gives a great number of statements from its correspondents, both from France and from foreign countries. Here are some significant excerpts:

At the observatory of pic du Midi: «This remarkable aurora was the first ever observed from the station of pic du Midi. It constitutes a rare phenomenon for this latitude... The first impression was of *a gigantic conflagration...*» (p. 54-57).

At La Chapelle-Saint-Laud, in Maine-et-Loire, the teacher kept this description given by one of his students, aged ten: «Yesterday evening there was a great red cloud; it was like *a sheet of blood*, then the cloud grew larger, forming great red threads, which kept going up, and below that, white threads, like chalk lines.» (p. 61).

In Oise, Mr. Henri Blain «at first believed that it was *the grim reflection of a vast inferno...* Many of the villagers, struck by the anomaly and intensity of the phenomenon, observed *somewhat nervously* from the window sills of their houses... These red glows were visible, then disappeared, and later on reappeared after a more or less lengthy period of time... These luminous

manifestations sometimes went up very high in the sky, and in colour and luminosity they were absolutely comparable to *the very vivid reflections of a violent, nearby inferno...* The intensity of this extraordinary celestial spectacle, its splendid brightness, its enormous extent, its extreme rarity at this intensity especially in our regions, and even more so in this season of the year, seemed worthy to us of being pointed out to the Society immediately...» (p. 61).

In Picardie: «At a quarter past five, noticed in the north-northwesterly direction a red glow which first attributed as being the result of *a far-off inferno...* Ten minutes later, *the great purple spot was extending* above our heads right up to Orion; other smaller and paler ones formed and disappeared in their turn. A few moments later, *the blazing sky* was being reflected in our faces; my wife, who was admiring the phenomenon at my side, appeared to me in a red reflection which seemed to me unreal. At a quarter to eight, the red glow reached its maximum intensity, *almost the whole sky seemed to be on fire*. A second drapery was quickly lit up, its luminosity was such that could tell the time on my watch. The spectacle was extraordinary. A brave peasant who had come near me to ask for news believed very seriously that it was *announcing the end of the world!*... The cocks, undoubtedly fooled by this unusual aurora, began crowing as though it were sunrise!» (p. 63).

At the minor seminary of Caen, the students contemplated from their dorm «a great red sheet, through which a few stars could be seen.» (p. 65).

A witness from Vaucluse employs the same expression: «I was surprised to notice a great red sheet in the sky. For a moment it resembled *a fire* to me somewhere in the surrounding area, whose glowing light was reflected in the clouds... I observed that during the whole duration of the phenomenon the dogs in the village and surrounding area began barking and howling. They did not stop until about half past ten.» (p. 65).

«In North Africa this aurora borealis was so intense that an admiral whose ships were cruising near the coast ordered a destroyer to turn towards the left, towards the northwest, *for he too believed that a fire was in the distance.*» (p. 68).

Another witness reports: «This aurora was visible in almost all of Tunisia. It

is a very rare phenomenon in our region since a similar one has not been recorded since 1891... In general it looked like a vast red or rose coloured glow, more or less streaked with white... *The natives, who were very frightened, saw in it a warning of the divine wrath; the Europeans believed it was a huge, distant fire.*» The descriptions coming from various points in Tunisia always come back to the same expressions, which reveals that the phenomenon had an astonishing uniformity: «the sky turning red», «a large reddish band which at first resembled a fire...», the «blazing sky», «a general blaze in the sky, the colour of a red brick», etc. The phenomenon was visible in all of North Africa. (p. 114)

In England: a witness spoke of «moving pleats of a red velour coloured curtain. The curtain was drawn and filled the whole space...» (p. 119) In Switzerland: «a spring-like day had preceded the unprecedented, unforgettable phenomenon.»

The astronomical review gave some reports originating from Czechoslovakia and Romania: «Very frequent but brief *conflagrations inflamed the sky right up to its zenith. It seemed that the fiery arch in the sky had come very low.*» (p. 120).

In Italy: «A phenomenon extremely rare in our country.» It was visible at Pontevedra in Spain, In Portugal: «Yesterday, for the first time in my life I observed a magnificent aurora borealis, a phenomenon very rare over here, which nobody can remember having seen for fifty years. At Lisbon and in all Portugal this phenomenon occasioned as much attention as surprise. Almost all the spectators believed that the sky was being lighted up by *an enormous fire*; and I myself believed the same thing at first. The apparition lasted almost two hours, from ten o'clock until midnight... Its colour was a more or less intense red.»⁸⁹¹ (p. 123).

In the United States, «this aurora was spectacular... Early in the evening my attention was drawn to the east by an enormous conflagration. Over a wide area the sky was alight with a red glow and I believed at first that *a great fire* was devouring Hampton Beach...» (p. 124). The aurora was also observed in Canada.

The astronomer, Carl Stromer, reports that one of his correspondents in Norway, at the station of Njuke Mountain (Tuddal), signalled to him that he

had heard noises «while the aurora was at its height and the sky seemed to be *an ocean of flames*... The observer and his assistant heard a curious sound coming from above them... which lasted about ten minutes, rose to a maximum and then vanished, following the fluctuations of the aurora's intensity. This sound, which resembled *the crackle of burning grass*, was perceived in the same region, in the Tuddal valley, by Mr. Oysteim Reisjaa. Everything was perfectly calm on the mountain, and nothing could explain the production of this noise, neither the wind, which was not blowing, nor the telegraph lines, nor motors. Above the observatories, from all sides, there was not a murmur in the forest.» (p. 309)

All these striking testimonies, however, come from either amateur or professional astronomers. They perhaps do not give us an exact image of the extreme astonishment mixed with disquiet which this extraordinary spectacle caused in the simple folk. Thus in conclusion, we give the article which appeared in the January 26 issue of *Le Petit Dauphinois*, which gives us a better idea of the enormous impact the phenomenon had on the various populations:

«Grenoble, January 25. – An atmospheric phenomenon of exceptional intensity was noticed this evening between seven-thirty and ten-thirty on the entire range of the Alps. This phenomenon manifested itself by an immense luminous trail which seemed to come from the sun, to unfold, fan-shaped, right up to its zenith. The breadth of the spectacle observed was such that *the blazing sky* resembled the brilliance of dawn. The people were astonished at first, then admired this celestial manifestation, which is rarely seen in these latitudes; then, as the phenomenon prolonged itself, *they grew disturbed*. Some curious scenes – especially in our countryside – were witnessed as the horizon remained purple. A thousand controversies swirled around this strange vision, which was believed to be *a vast fire in the mountains*, or gigantic military manoeuvres with searchlights; it was even believed – and this was the almost unanimous and not the least interesting observation – that the sun was going to rise...

«Now according to the first news we obtained from qualified professors, teachers of meteorology, it was a splendid aurora borealis, the most beautiful one to manifest itself in western Europe for centuries...

«From the city itself the phenomenon was not very well perceived. But as soon as one left the suburbs, even without thinking of looking out over

Grenoble, in the north *a gigantic blaze* could be perceived.

«At *Le Petit Dauphinois* all the telephone lines were jammed by our correspondents – even the most distant ones – who informed us of the celestial manifestation. At eight o'clock, this animation which was continually increasing changed on certain points into a real terror.»

A MESSAGE FROM A CREATIVE PROVIDENCE

We do not know who were wiser: the simple people who were so alarmed by such a spectacle, or the *savants*, for whom the verbal label of “aurora borealis” was enough to reassure them. Granted, the astronomer was right to insist on the natural character of the phenomenon, which of itself has no miraculous element. It was an aurora borealis, such as there have already been in the past⁸⁹², and as there will undoubtedly be in the future. But if the phenomena are considered merely from the viewpoint of scientific investigation, we come to forget that the Creator is the sovereign master of nature, that He freely directs it, that He dominates it and that He can use it as a language susceptible of speaking to man. And wise men are not insensible to this message. After a similar spectacle, although far less important, witnessed on January 30, 1927, one of these perceptive men wrote:

«Yesterday morning around seven, as we were passing through Pont Royal,... we saw the most wonderful and *the most terrifying of spectacles* in the sky. The sun rose *in a sea of blood*. Long waves in the air, going from bright red to deep purple went up over Sainte-Chapelle of Notre Dame, and the softness of these long greenish waves, so clearly visible between *these fiery clouds*, only added to *the tragic mystery* of this beautiful sky at sunrise... *So many reddish flames* over such a beautiful sky could not fail to remind us of other effusions of the same colour. Without putting any great faith in such signs in the sky... We couldn't help but wonder if *the great river of blood was not an omen of some other blood of human origin*, which Mr. Briand's folly is about to spill.»⁸⁹³

Yes, for the perceptive man, and a fortiori for whoever is able to read the signs of the times in the light of faith – especially in the event that the event had been predicted and its significance explained – this nocturnal sky tragically set ablaze, which resembled an ocean of blood and flames, was the most expressive and

alarming evocation of the great chastisement to come⁸⁹⁴... Although so many simple and farsighted souls were able to recognize the hand of creative Providence in this unusual phenomenon and grasp the divine lesson in this warning, it is infinitely regrettable that Sister Lucy was the only one who knew with certainty its exact meaning.

THE SECRET NOT REVEALED

In effect, Sister Lucy's confessors had not yet authorized her to reveal the Secret. «“It is a shame that the Secret was not published before the war”, Father Jongen said to her in 1946. “In this way the prediction would have had more force. Why didn't you make it known earlier?” “*Because nobody asked me to.*”»⁸⁹⁵ It was not God's will that Sister Lucy reveal the Secret on her own authority, without the consent of her superiors, with the intention of acting completely independently, like a prophet. She explained this to her bishop on August 31, 1941:

«It may be, Your Excellency, that some people think that I should have made known all this some time ago, because they consider that it would have been twice as valuable years beforehand. This would have been the case, if God had willed to present me to the world as a prophetess. But I believe that God had no such intention, when He made known these things to me. If that had been the case, I think that, in 1917, when He ordered me to keep silence, *and this order was confirmed by those who represented Him*, He would, on the contrary, have ordered me to speak.»⁸⁹⁶

Indeed, after the delay of silence imposed by Our Lady, the disclosure of Her Secret as well as the fulfilment of Her requests depended solely on the cooperation of the seer's hierarchical superiors: her confessors and her bishop. This is because God wanted it that way. If they had been the only ones involved, they surely would not have waited so long. But they undoubtedly feared sponsoring the publication of a revelation which they had reason to believe might not be welcome at the Vatican. Besides, their fears were not unfounded since Pope Pius XI had not deigned to respond to the requests addressed to him.

Still, because of this delay for which Sister Lucy was not responsible, she has been accused of prophesying *post eventum*, of having invented the text of the Secret after seeing the events unfolding before her eyes! We have already given

the answer to this objection in the long critical demonstration at the end of Volume I. Canon Formigao had already formulated this answer on September 8, 1938, in a letter to Bishop da Silva regarding the apparitions at Pontevedra in 1925:

«Really, the admirable work of Fatima constitutes in its entirety a harmonious, unique and indivisible whole: Either we admit that Divine Providence established it, and firmly and sweetly disposes it, with all the elements composing it; or on the contrary it is logical to exclude one thing after another, even to the point of denying, against all the evidence, the reality of the apparitions and wonderful events (of 1917).»⁸⁹⁷

We must admire the farsightedness of the theologian and mystic who, in one sentence, brought in advance a decisive response to the entire critical edifice erected by Father Dhanis.

For Sister Lucy is perfectly credible. Besides, in the events of Fatima there are enough unquestionable proofs and striking miracles which forbid any reasonable doubt about her testimony! In the end, the objection rests on a grave misunderstanding of God's designs at Fatima: His primary purpose was not to warn the people directly, and democratically, for them to convert. This would have been the case had Sister Lucy published the prophecies of the Secret on her own initiative. God's design is entirely different: He wants to save the world through devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but He also wills that the Pastors of His Church be the ones who establish its cult solemnly, using their divine authority. In this lies the admirable Wisdom of God, who closely subordinates His extraordinary interventions in history to the free decisions of the hierarchical authorities instituted by Him to direct His Church, making all the supernatural fruitfulness of these interventions dependent on these hierarchical authorities.

Such is undoubtedly the deeper reason why Sister Lucy did not divulge earlier the prophecies she had been entrusted with since 1917. However, without yet revealing the text of the great Secret such as she wrote it down for Pope Pius XII in 1940, after receiving the express order of her confessor Sister Lucy did everything she could to warn those concerned about the imminence of the chastisement. It was late, very late. But if it was too late to completely ward off the bloody catastrophe, perhaps it was not too late to at least delay it, or mitigate its terrible rigour.

II. THE FINAL APPROACHES IN THE FACE OF THE MENACING PERIL

1938: «GOD MADE ME FEEL THAT THE TERRIBLE MOMENT WAS DRAWING NEAR...»

In her Third Memoir on August 31, 1941, Sister Lucy reminded her bishop of the months of anxious waiting she experienced after the great sign announcing the chastisement:

«Be that as it may (concerning the exact nature of this atmospheric phenomenon), God made use of this to make me understand that His justice was about to strike the guilty nations. For this reason, I began to plead insistently for the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays, and the consecration of Russia. My intention was to obtain mercy and pardon, not only for the whole world, but for Europe in particular.

«When God, in His infinite mercy, *made me feel that the terrible moment was drawing near*, Your Excellency may recall how, whenever occasion offered, I took the opportunity of pointing it out.»⁸⁹⁸

Unfortunately the majority of these documents have not yet been published, possibly because they reveal too clearly the regrettable inertia of the Church authorities... Indeed, as a most loving Father, with untiring mercy God had multiplied His warnings and requests to try to spare His children up to the very last moment. He looked for the slightest sign of their repentance, and their docile obedience to His sovereign will for our century: that the Pope and the bishops undertake to make the Immaculate Heart of Mary better known and loved. In this supernatural context we must examine the message of Balasar which, so to speak, for a short time was grafted onto the more extensive mystery of Fatima.

THE MISSION OF ALEXANDRINA MARIA DA COSTA

«God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.» This divine oracle, pronounced in 1917 by Our Lady of Fatima, simultaneously explains both the mission of Sister Lucy and the mission of another Portuguese seer: Alexandrina Maria da Costa. The requests and promises of Fatima were

destined to dominate our whole century. But while He waited for the fuller realization of this great design of mercy through the conversion of Russia, God chose another messenger to entrust her with obtaining another less spectacular and meritorious act. Still, this act would contribute to the development of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and facilitate the fulfilment of the most important requests, the only decisive ones, those of Fatima.

Alexandrina was born on March 30, 1904, at Balasar, a small village to the north of Porto. She lived a saintly life there until her death on October 13, 1955, favoured with charisms and extraordinary mystical graces. «The diocesan Process for her beatification opened at Braga on January 14, 1967, and was successfully concluded on April 14, 1973.»⁸⁹⁹

On August 1, 1935, Our Lord asked Alexandrina to write to the Holy Father to ask him to consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: «Once, I asked for the consecration of the human race to My Divine Heart. Now, I ask for (the consecration) to the Immaculate Heart of My Most Holy Mother.»⁹⁰⁰ Father Pinho, her Jesuit confessor, waited prudently. Since Our Lord reiterated His request, he passed it on to the Holy Father, writing to Cardinal Pacelli on September 11, 1936. The Cardinal had the Holy Office perform an inquiry, to interrogate the paralyzed seer of Balasar and have her examined. In 1937, the Secretariat of State requested additional information from the Archbishop of Braga, who in turn referred to the seer's confessor, Father Pinho.⁹⁰¹

JUNE 1938: THE PORTUGUESE BISHOPS ADDRESS A COLLECTIVE LETTER TO THE HOLY FATHER

In June of 1938, Father Pinho happened to be preaching the Spiritual Exercises to the Portuguese bishops, who were meeting at Fatima for their annual retreat. Over a year had gone by since Bishop da Silva had passed on the request for the consecration of Russia to the Holy Father. Rome still had not made any response. Faced with this obstinate silence, the bishops sent a collective request, this time for *the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. Here is the text, which like Bishop da Silva's letter of the year before, tried to draw the Holy Father's attention to the striking miracle of peace worked by the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Portugal. It was up to the Pope to extend this miracle to all of Christendom, by having recourse to the same supremely effective means before it was too late:

«Most Holy Father,

«The Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon and all the Archbishops and bishops of Portugal have met in the sanctuary of Fatima at the feet of the Most Holy Virgin to renew the consecration which they made some time ago to Her Immaculate Heart.⁹⁰² They thank Her for having saved Portugal, especially during these last two years, from the danger of communism, and exult with joy over such a great and miraculous blessing granted by the divine Mother.

«Humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, they urgently request that, when Your Holiness judges it opportune, the whole world also be consecrated to this most pure Heart, so that it be delivered once and for all from so many perils threatening it from all directions, and that the peace of Christ reign in the kingdom of Christ, through the Mother of God's mediation.» (The names of all the prelates follow.)⁹⁰³

Pope Pius XI did not respond to this solemn request. Once again months went by, and nothing was done.

FEBRUARY 6, 1939: «THE WAR PREDICTED BY OUR LADY IS IMMINENT»

Although all of Sister Lucy's letters to Bishop da Silva have unfortunately still not been published, we still have a weighty testimony concerning the repeated and insistent interventions of the seer, who was constantly predicting the war. That testimony comes from Cardinal Cerejeira. In 1967, he declared at Rome:

«I can add that the imminence of this war and its violence and extent was communicated to the Bishop of Leiria seven months before its beginning. Indeed, I had in my hand the letter of February 6, 1939, where the seer called "the war predicted by Our Lady" imminent (her handwriting says eminent), and promised Our Lady's protection to Portugal "thanks to the consecration to Her Immaculate Heart made by the Portuguese episcopate".

«I don't know what became of this letter. But I possess only a summary of it drawn up by the hand of the Bishop of Leiria, dated the following October 24, which says the following: "The principal chastisement will be for the nations that wanted to destroy the kingdom of God in souls. Portugal is also guilty and will suffer something, but the Immaculate Heart of Mary

will protect it; the good Lord desires that Portugal make reparation and pray for itself and for other nations. Spain was the first to be punished, it has received its chastisement which is not yet over, and the hour approaches for others. God is resolved to purify in their blood all the nations which want to destroy His kingdom in souls; and yet He promises to be appeased and grant pardon, if people pray and do penance.»⁹⁰⁴

A few days after this letter was written, on February 10, 1939, Pope Pius XI died.

MARCH (OR MAY) 1939: «THE MOMENT APPROACHES WHEN THE RIGOURS OF MY JUSTICE WILL PUNISH THE CRIMES OF VARIOUS NATIONS»

In her writings, Sister Lucy speaks of another divine communication:

«In another communication, about March 1939⁹⁰⁵, Our Lord said to me once more: “Ask, ask again insistently for the promulgation of the Communion of Reparation in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the First Saturdays. The time is coming when the rigour of My justice will punish the crimes of diverse nations. Some of them will be annihilated. At last the severity of My justice will fall severely on those who want to destroy My reign in souls.”»⁹⁰⁶

MARCH 19, 1939: «WAR OR PEACE IN THE WORLD DEPEND ON IT»

In November of 1938, Father Aparicio had left Portugal to begin a long missionary career in Brazil. On March 19, 1939, Sister Lucy wrote to him, keeping him abreast of her efforts to propagate the devotion of reparation on the five first Saturdays, as far as she was able. At her request, the Mother Provincial of the Dorotheans went to the Bishop of Porto to ask permission for publishing the text of “the great promise”, and she obtained it. Sister Lucy concludes her letter:

«On the practice of this devotion together with the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, world peace or world war depends. This is the reason I desired its propagation so greatly and especially because it is the

will of Our Good Lord and our beloved Heavenly Mother.»⁹⁰⁷

JUNE 20, 1939: «A CHASTISEMENT SUCH AS NEVER BEFORE, HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE...»

Three months later, in a new letter to Father Aparicio, she speaks to him once more of the coming peril, and in even more striking terms:

«Our Lady promised to delay the scourge of war if this devotion was propagated and practised. We see Her avert the chastisement to the extent that efforts are made to propagate it. But I am afraid that we cannot do more than we are doing and that God in His anger will lift the arms of His mercy and let the world be ravaged by this chastisement. It will be a chastisement such as never before, *horrible, horrible*.»⁹⁰⁸

On August 10, 1939, Father Aparicio noted the strong impression which Sister Lucy's prophecies had made upon him:

«The way in which she affirms and prognosticates events impressed me. She does not doubt, and she speaks categorically, like some one who has seen future events. I even think that Our Lady has revealed them to her.»⁹⁰⁹

The same thing that Sister Lucy explained so insistently to her old confessor we can be sure that she explained to her bishop and current director.⁹¹⁰

JULY 1939: A RUDE AWAKENING FOR BISHOP DA SILVA

After suffering from dislocation of the retina, Bishop da Silva had to spend several weeks in the hospital, to undergo a delicate operation in which he risked becoming permanently blind. On July 31, Sister Lucy writes to Father Aparicio:

«Father Carlos, who had been one of Your Reverence's novices, was with His Excellency, and he gave me news almost every day... In one of his letters he said to me: "Tonight His Grace the bishop was delirious, He had a very bad night and do you know whom he spoke about? About you. But don't worry, he didn't give away any secret to me."»

Bishop da Silva surely interpreted this painful trial of bad health as a warning

from Heaven. Sister Lucy reports:

«His Grace the bishop dictated two letters which Father Carlos sent me, and which His Grace signed. His handwriting was like that of a child learning how to write. But as soon as he could he wrote to me personally. The first time he wrote very badly; the handwriting and lines were very crooked; the second time he wrote normally. His Grace tells me that he will do everything in his power to extend the cult of our beloved Mother in Heaven more and more. He gives me news of what is happening and tells me what he plans to do to please Our Good Lord and for the glory of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»⁹¹¹

Sister Lucy immediately took advantage «of this good opportunity» which «was offered» her, to send her bishop the text of “the great promise” one more time. Finally, on September 13, 1939, she was heard. But it was late, very late... For during the summer of 1939 the march towards war was suddenly precipitated. On August 22, news of the Germano-Soviet pact exploded like a bomb. On September 1, Hitler invaded Poland, and two days later, England led France into declaring war on Germany.

Heaven’s warnings had not been heeded. Europe had blindly cast itself into this war, which was to be humanity’s chastisement: «*The war is going to end, but if men do not cease offending God... If My requests are not heeded, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions... Another worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI*», and Sister Lucy added that this war was to be «the most horrible there ever was». Indeed, never had humanity experienced such a terrible slaughter, numbering over forty million victims.

TWO OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE SECRET

This war, which Sister Lucy had prophesied as imminent after January of 1938, had been predicted by Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. However, she had predicted it in terms which provoked the scorn or indignation of many critics, when after a long delay the Secret was finally published. These anomalies of a text which was disclosed after the events, events which at first glance seem to prove it wrong, seem to us on the contrary as a new proof of authenticity. For never would anybody writing in 1940 have had the idea of attributing to the Most Holy Virgin

the idea that the war would begin under Pius XI, and that a non-converted Russia would be the principal country responsible...

Father Dhanis did not fail to protest against «the hardly objective manner in which the provocation of the war is described in the Secret...»⁹¹² In 1950, an English Jesuit, Father Martindale, who had cleverly condensed in a thirty page pamphlet all the objections of his Belgian predecessor – objections as perfidious as they were outdated – repeats the same critique: «It cannot be said that Russia was the only country responsible for “Hitler’s war”.»⁹¹³ The Secret does not say that. However, without excluding the other nations responsible, it is true that it still places Bolshevik Russia, and not Nazi Germany, on the first rank of nations responsible for the war...

III. «THE WAR OF HITLER» OR THE WAR OF MOSCOW?

In refutation of our critics, who wrongly and too hastily considered as historically evident what in reality was a very partial and superficial view of the history of World War II, gradual access to secret archives has allowed us to establish one fact more and more clearly. Bolshevik Russia was not only the great beneficiary of this atrocious war, but it was also the most effective active accomplice of the Nazis, and even instigated the war. This historical truth gives the Fatima Secret an unexpected profundity: we will establish conclusively that because Stalin’s Russia was not converted, because it was allowed to pursue its political double-dealing with diabolical Machiavellianism, the Second World War broke out only twenty years after the original slaughter of 1914-918.

WAR, THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE

It would not be false to apply the well-known adage to Stalin: *Is fecit cui prodest* [done by the one who profits from it]. This indeed is one of the first points that can be solidly established: Stalin had foreseen for many years this European war between Germany and the Anglo-French bloc, he had desired it and he had taken all possible measures to provoke it. He had the highest interest in doing so. Already on January 22, 1934, Kaganovich, Stalin’s brother-in-law, had avowed in Izvestia: «The conflict between Germany and France reinforces our situation in Europe... We must widen the differences between the European states.»⁹¹⁴

THE GERMANO-SOVIET ACCORD

The Germano-Soviet accord was the masterpiece of this clever policy, whose ultimate, declared and considered end was the European war, which in every respect would profit the USSR and the international Left. Far from being a last minute arrangement, it had been on the contrary Stalin's major objective, as Sovietologists have gradually discovered.

Originally the Kremlin had worked for Germany's recovery, and even for Hitler's stunning rise to power. A. Rossi, one of the experts of Soviet history writes:

«In 1917, the Bolshevik leaders were convinced that the fate of the new regime in Russia depended on what kind of relations it succeeded in establishing with Germany.» After 1920, «to a politically isolated Germany they offered a common chance of “rebuilding”, and the first pact was signed in April 1922, at Rapallo... The idea was to exploit the resentments and sufferings of a defeated Germany and make her an ally in the struggle against the Western powers... It was also a question of jumping out of the straitjackets of the Versailles treaty... When the rise of the National Socialist movement became obvious and menacing after 1930, Stalin was not troubled at all; on the contrary, he rubbed his hands... And he squarely played the “Nazi card”... *The idea was to aggravate Hitler's pressure and pit it against Western Europe. If the operation succeeded, sooner or later there would be a war, from which only Russia would be preserved.* These perspectives and calculations were in no way changed when Hitler later came into power.»⁹¹⁵

To provoke the war, the USSR had to come to an understanding with Germany. «Stalin's international policy during these first ten years» – wrote a high Soviet official in 1939 – «was nothing more than a series of manoeuvres designed to put him in a favourable position to deal with Hitler.»⁹¹⁶ In 1982, Heller and Nekrich give numerous and solid proofs of this interpretation of Stalin's policy.⁹¹⁷ Among others, there is the following:

When Germany, in 1935, broke the military provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and restored compulsory military service, «Stalin showed his understanding and even approved this new step towards war. At the end of March 1935, he said to Anthony Eden during the course of their

conversations in the Kremlin: “Sooner or later the German people had to liberate themselves from the chains of Versailles... I repeat, a great people like the German people had to cast away the chains of Versailles.»⁹¹⁸

«THE CRUSADE OF THE DEMOCRACIES»

But while Moscow secretly informed Berlin of its desire to arrive at an understanding, and even proposed on December 21, 1935, «a bilateral non-aggression pact», Stalin pushed England and France into war against Hitler. After having entered the League of Nations on September 18, 1934, on May 2, 1935, Stalin signed a treaty of mutual assistance with France. From that moment until August, 1939, the communists became the most fervent apostles of the “crusade of the democracies” against Nazism, and the fiercest supporters of an immediate and all-out war against Germany.⁹¹⁹ It was necessary, no matter what the cost, to defend Poland and die for Danzig!

THE CYNICAL DOUBLE-DEALING WHICH LED TO WAR

Although publicly anti-Nazi, Stalin had continually been making secret advances to Germany and looking for an alliance with her. The stages of this *rapprochement* were outlined in 1933 and became very clear after October 1938; excellent accounts are found in Heller and Nekrich, or Rossi. “The secret archives of the Wilhelmstrasse” also testify to this process.⁹²⁰

Stalin’s cynical double-crossing is well known. On August 23, 1939, while the English and French military delegations were still at Moscow, the Germano-Soviet non-aggression pact had been signed. Hitler had accepted all of Stalin’s demands. Stalin was to receive his share of the dismemberment of Poland, along with the Baltic states in the north and Bessarabia in the south. With reason do Heller and Nekrich write:

«The conclusion of the accords with Hitler’s Germany crowned Stalin’s efforts to forge a Soviet-German alliance... “It is difficult to overestimate the international importance of the Soviet-German pact”, Molotov declared on August 31, 1939. “It is a turning point in the history of Europe and not just of Europe.”»

Nekrich then comments, again with reason:

«It was true. A turning point really had taken place in the history of Europe and the world: *the Soviet Union had opened the door to a war by signing a pact with Germany...* One week later, on September 1, Germany attacked Poland. It was the beginning of the Second World War.»⁹²¹

To summarize: Stalin desired a war, the longest war possible, where his adversaries would be mutually exhausted. Then late in the game, he would intervene on the side of the victors, and walk away with all the fruits of the victory.⁹²² He was able to manoeuvre perfectly to achieve these ends: 1) By contributing to Germany's recovery. 2) By supporting since 1933, and especially since 1935, the warmongering designs of Judeo-Masonry, which had decided on provoking a war against Hitler. 3) By continuing at the same time to let the Fuhrer know that he desired to reach an understanding with him, and would not in any way oppose his expansionist projects. 4) Finally, by concluding his famous pact with Ribbentrop in August, 1939, he encouraged Hitler to attack Poland, certain that this offensive would definitely provoke a declaration of war by France and England.

Since his rise to power, Stalin had made this horrible war the major objective of his foreign policy. He was bold enough to say it publicly on May 22, 1939: «The renewal of broad international action will not be possible unless we succeed in exploiting the antagonisms between the capitalist states, to *precipitate them into an armed conflict*. The principal work of our communist parties must be to *facilitate such a conflict*.»⁹²³

Here is the key to the apparently inconsistent and contradictory manoeuvrings of Bolshevik policy between the two world wars. In the end, nobody could have desired this war more than Stalin – not even Hitler, and certainly not Mussolini, who had been drawn into it by the democracies' odious attitudes towards him. Nobody could have desired this war for so long, nobody could have planned it so cold-bloodedly, and caused it to break out at the right time, and according to the interests of world communism. Nobody could have profited from it more than the USSR, since at the end of this war its empire became the vastest empire in the entire globe.

IV. «IN THE REIGN OF PIUS XI», OR PIUS XII?

There is a second apparent error in the Secret of Fatima that Martindale brings up, following the critique by Dhanis and Journet: «The war did not begin under Pius XI but under Pius XII.»⁹²⁴ How is this surprising anomaly to be explained? For Pius XI died on February 10, 1939, while war was not declared until seven months later, on September 3. In her letter to Pope Pius XII written on October 24, 1940, the letter which reveals the great Secret to him, Sister Lucy had written, «*no reinado de Pio XI*» (in the reign of Pius XI).⁹²⁵ But in the final copy sent to the Pope the following December 2, she had to correct it, no doubt at the request of Bishop da Silva: the phrase was simplified down to «*another future war*».⁹²⁶ Yet, Sister Lucy was sure she had not been mistaken. In her Second and Third Memoirs, in 1941, she repeats the authentic expression: «in the reign of Pius XI». In 1946, Father Jongen questioned her on this point:

«“Did the Most Holy Virgin really pronounce the name of Pius XI?” “Yes. We did not know if it was a Pope or a king. But the Most Holy Virgin spoke of Pius XI.” “But didn’t the war begin under Pius XII?” “The annexation of Austria was the occasion for it. When the Munich accord was signed, the sisters were jubilant, because the peace seemed to be saved. I knew better than they did, unfortunately.” “But this Jesuit Father (Dhanis) remarks that the occasion for a war is not the same thing as its happening.” This observation made no impression on the Sister.»⁹²⁷

THE WAR BEFORE THE WAR

Sister Lucy is right, and her answer has none of that verbal subtlety people sometimes use to get out of a sticky objection. This is a fact often stressed by historians: the Second World War had already begun even before it was declared on paper. Léon Noël, the French ambassador to Warsaw from 1935 to 1939, was able to write a book significantly titled: *The War of '39 Began Four Years Earlier*.⁹²⁸

Six months before war was declared, Gabriel Louis-Jaray published *The German Offensive in Europe*, where he explained just that: the war had, for all practical purposes, already begun.⁹²⁹ «Introduction: Germany at war. History will probably settle on the date March 7, 1936 as Germany’s entry into the war... Hitler has broken the pact freely decided on at Locarno, and suddenly advanced his armies to the Rhineland territory, which had been demilitarized by common accord; it is his first act of war directly aimed at France.»⁹³⁰

In reality it was nothing more than a first step. The German army was not ready. «Thus it was decided that the German contingents beyond the Rhine would withdraw if the French army itself entered the Rhineland.»⁹³¹ Had France reacted, Hitler would have backed down.

On the other hand, when the columns of the *Wehrmacht* entered Austria on March 12, 1938, Hitler's decision had already been made. If it were necessary, he would launch an all-out war. «In his discourse to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, the Fuhrer declared that he had *decided on the invasion of Austria in January of 1938*, and the invasion of Bohemia on May 28, 1938.»⁹³² Thus it can be said in all truth that the Second World War *began* under Pius XI. The nocturnal aurora of January 25, 1938, did indeed correspond to a decisive stage in the unfolding of the war.

At the same time in Poland, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Apostle of the Immaculata, also began prophesying that war was inevitable and imminent:

«In March 1938, he said – these are his exact words, as one of his brothers was in the habit of stenographing his words – “Know, my little children, that an atrocious conflict is being prepared. We do not yet know what stages it will go through. In our country, Poland, we can expect the worst.”»⁹³³

THE WAR PIUS XI COULD HAVE PREVENTED

The expression of the great Secret, «in the reign of Pius XI», undoubtedly has another meaning than a purely chronological indication of the beginning of the war. Of itself this would have no importance. Did not Our Lady of Fatima wish to use this expression above all to designate the Pontiff who for his part was to carry a heavy responsibility for the war? We remember, indeed, that after predicting this war Our Lady continued: «*To prevent this*, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of the month.» Now as we have seen, Pope Pius XI was informed of these requests, and the promise of Russia's conversion connected with them, in 1930 and again in 1937. Finally the collective petition of the Portuguese bishops in June 1938, although slightly different in inspiration, had drawn his attention once more to Fatima and the urgent necessity of a solemn consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary to obtain the graces of peace for the world. The responsibility of the Pope, who did not deign to show

interest in these requests, and in the end decided to ignore them, even in the hour of imminent peril, is certain. The Secret of Fatima seems to underline this responsibility in a formula which is reminiscent of the *sub Pontio Pilato* in our Creed: «If My requests are not heeded, another worse one will begin *in the reign of Pius XI.*»

In the light of Fatima, it must be said that Pope Pius XI's long pontificate appears in a very sorry light. He had neglected the extraordinary help which Heaven was offering him to effectively contribute to the salvation of souls and world peace. Thus in a different order, a purely supernatural order in which the Fatima message belongs, the historian must make the same sad observation.

MORE THAN TEN YEARS OF A «MOST UNFORTUNATE POLICY»

The great political designs which Pius XI saw fit to impose – in a very clear break with Saint Pius X, and with an authority that did not allow the least discussion, both for the interior policy of Catholic nations as well as international policy – proved disastrous in the final analysis. In March 1937, he clearly changed the political orientation of his pontificate, and the eighty-year-old Pope finally published *Divini Redemptoris* against communism and *Mit Brennender Sorge* against Nazism. Meanwhile, under the fortunate influence of Mother Agnes, Prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux and elder sister of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, and thanks to Cardinal Pacelli's influence, he accepted in principle a lifting of the sanctions against *Action Française* and blessed Franco's Crusade. But by then it was very late.

In June of 1937, writing to Sister Madeleine of the Carmel of Lisieux, Charles Maurras, who at the time publicly supported the Pope's courageous Crusade against Bolshevism and Nazism, remarked to his correspondent:

«It is enough to have read and followed events closely. It is enough to see: the present crusade against communism had been requested in 1922 by Cardinal Mercier of Malines, while the first act of the pontificate, in April 1922, had been to make advances to Bolshevik Russia which were abominably repaid! And Germany! Germany, which had been fed, coddled, encouraged, strengthened in every way, and which responds – just like the Germans! – to so many imprudent benefits...

«Have I told you how the great Spanish errors were determined, like a lightning bolt, by a generous blunder of poor King Alfonso XIII, for whom Cardinal Merry del Val had requested protection so that he would not be treated like Cardinal Billot? In 1931 the clergy had been mobilized against the monarchy and overturned it, and when a religious and national somersault had somewhat restored the Spanish situation, the fear of all firm and powerful civil authority once again turned the spiritual forces in favour of the revolution, in February of last year.

«A sad history, and it was the same with you! The famous *confidential memorandum* aiding and supporting the Reds in 1924; while at Rome Cardinal Billot heard these words: “Your Frenchmen have voted very badly.” “Most Holy Father, it is your nuncio’s fault.” “My nuncio applies *my policy, my policy, my policy...*” And he banged on the table.⁹³⁴ A most unfortunate policy.

«Then again, in 1926, their loyal servants in *Action Française* were pushed aside, as had been their loyal servants in the Society of Jesus in the eighteenth century; and the revolution went on with gusto even in those circles which were least prepared for it.»

Granted, beginning in 1936 and 1937, the Pope had pronounced warnings and taken sanctions against the “Red Christians” of Terre nouvelle, Sept, Esprit, or even La Croix. But these “Reds”, who were openly betraying the Church and Christendom, were the same Christian-Democrats and Sillonists he had encouraged, upheld, and at times even assisted for fifteen years...

From the beginning of his pontificate, in contrast to the prudent policy of Saint Pius X, he had resolutely taken the side of the liberal democracies, even the Masonic and laicizing ones, against all movements or governments of national salvation which were monarchical or dictatorial, no matter how favourable they were to the Church. So, against the near unanimous opinions of the bishops concerned, in four countries which had been part of Christendom for centuries, by his mandatory directives he had abandoned the political power to the worst enemies of the Church when he could have preserved them, and thus worked felicitously to maintain peace in the world. While movements of Catholic nationalism – the only effective ramparts against the twofold peril of Bolshevism and Nazism – were disapproved and condemned, the Pope extended his hand to the Bolsheviks, worked for Germany’s recovery, and led a campaign against

fascism, contributing to Italy's isolation. Italy, in spite of itself, was soon pushed into an unnatural alliance with Nazi Germany...⁹³⁵ When, faced with the frightening spectacle of the Spanish Civil War, and under the influence of his Secretary of State, a sickly and aging Pius XI began to correct course, war had unfortunately become inevitable.

At the time there was still one final recourse: to fulfil *in extremis* Our Lady's requests; to consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart and solemnly approve the devotion of reparation in Her honour on the five first Saturdays of the month. With infinite mercy, God would have averted the chastisements and fulfilled His promises of peace, without any doubt.⁹³⁶ But the Pope had other projects. He continued his exhausting struggle to the very end, but according to his own views.

The sentence in the great Secret, which links the mention of the Second World War with the name of Pope Pius XI and not his successor, Pius XII, is true for two reasons. It is true on the supernatural level, in the failure to fulfil the great designs of peace revealed at Fatima. It is also true on the political plane.

APPENDIX I - THE «NIGHT ILLUMINED BY AN UNKNOWN LIGHT» (JANUARY 25-26, 1938)

We have quoted a sufficient number of testimonies to show what a profound impression the nocturnal aurora of January 25-26, 1938, made on the people. To complete our dossier and to show that whatever its nature was – even if it was only a natural phenomenon, as it most probably was – this atmospheric event could not be compared with a banal and ordinary happening, we must cite some testimony here which serves as historical documentation. It comes from men who were specialists at the time, and proves that they themselves were astonished by the unusual aspects of this aurora borealis. *Le Nouvelliste de Lyons* reproduces this testimony:

«During the night we were able to join the director of the observatory of Saint-Genis-Laval, Mr. Dufay, who along with his colleagues was able to follow the phenomenon and study it in all its vastness.⁹³⁷ He gave us the following precisions regarding the result of his observations. He said: “The spectacle which we have just witnessed is very curious. It is an aurora borealis at high

altitude, a very rare phenomenon for our latitudes, distinguished this time by rays of oxygen and nitrogen emissions *of a peculiar spectral composition*.

«The aurora borealis is always related to a spot which passes at certain times to the central meridian of the sun. These phenomena visible in the sky normally take place forty-eight hours after the passage of the spot. Now the studies which we have made on the sun these past few days allow us to state that no shadow has passed over the sun. *This observation makes the phenomenon even more curious since the causes of the aurora borealis no longer subsist.*»⁹³⁸

In a report on “the magnetic disturbance of January 25, 1938”, Gaston Gibault wrote: «This magnetic disturbance was accompanied by an aurora of exceptional intensity and duration for our regions.»⁹³⁹

For his part, Camille Flammarion wrote in the “Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of France”: «... When the splendid polar aurora took place, this great spot (which had been observable on the polar disk from January 12-24) had already been removed from seeing range of the earth through the sun’s rotation, and no important spot was then visible on the surface of the sun. Likewise, up to the present no spectroscopic phenomenon has come to bring its testimony to confirm the solar origin of this aurora, which by its magnificence, its visibility at the low altitudes of our terrestrial hemisphere, and its spectral character, must be considered abnormal.»⁹⁴⁰

These remarks were made at a time when the means of observation science had at its disposal in this area were very imperfect. Besides, they are not altogether consistent.⁹⁴¹ They cannot prudently be taken literally, and we would be wrong to conclude that the event was miraculous based on this reasoning. Since then, immense progress has been made in the observation and explanation of phenomena, which has allowed science to clear up certain points that up to the present had remained mysterious. Thus the absence of the sunspot at the moment of the aurora could be explained by a better knowledge of the delay necessary between the solar eruption and its effects in the terrestrial atmosphere. Besides, the most recent experiences seem to show that «although in a number of circumstances the observation of auroras effectively follows the solar eruption, this is not always the case...»⁹⁴²

To what extent was the nocturnal aurora of January 25-26 “normal” or “abnormal”? The few facts which we have furnished as documentation leave the

question open. It is the job of science to resolve the question by comparing all the most certain data of observation and the most precise facts of the time with the most recent discoveries in this domain. For the determination of the “normal” or “abnormal” character of a natural phenomenon of course presupposes that “the norm” and the scientific laws which express it are already sufficiently elucidated. Meanwhile, two conclusions seem to us beyond question:

1) The unusual and mysterious character of this aurora *in 1938* gave it all the elements necessary for it to be, in the designs of Providence, a spectacular and eloquent sign of the war which was imminent: «The great sign given you by God that He is about to punish the world...»

2) The expression employed by the great Secret to designate this nocturnal aurora proves to be remarkably exact: «A night illumined by an unknown light.» It could not be said better. For even today, in spite of the possibility of creating artificial auroras, the term “aurora borealis” seems more like a convenient label than a precise scientific denomination designating a well-defined atmospheric phenomenon, whose origin and mechanism can be completely explained. Here is what some specialists say:

«The morphology of auroras is now well known, although we still do not know where the differences come from. With the improvements in devices used for observations, the number of distinct types is constantly on the increase. They are distinguished not only by their form, but also by their colour, altitude, duration, geographical distribution, etc. The appearance of these different forms does not seem to be connected to any known character of the terrestrial atmosphere.»⁹⁴³

«In spite of the great amount of work done, at the present time, no model explaining the results as a whole has been extracted. In addition, there are still many observations which have not received a correct interpretation or even simply been confirmed.»⁹⁴⁴

«... It is so true that the mechanism of auroras remains unknown. This mechanism indeed appears extremely complex, scientists having acquired the conviction that auroras are caused by a real restructuring of the magnetos here, following the stirrings of which it is the object.» But what is «the origin of these stirrings in the upper atmosphere which engender auroras? There is the whole problem.» Various hypotheses are proposed. «Of course, in the quarter of a century which has elapsed, the situation has changed (in the sense of an immense

improvement of the possibilities of observation using spatial engines), without however reaching the synthesis which had been expected.»⁹⁴⁵

Let us conclude. The expression of the great Secret to designate the nocturnal aurora of January 25-26, 1938 – «When you see a night illumined by an unknown light» – had a remarkable, astonishing, scientific exactness.

APPENDIX II⁹⁴⁶ - FATHER APARICIO'S EFFORTS TO PROPAGATE THE REPARATORY DEVOTION (1938 - 1939)

It is necessary to do justice to the two eminent Portuguese Jesuits who were Sister Lucy's spiritual directors from 1927 to 1941. If Our Lady's requests were not obeyed, this delay cannot be imputed to their lack of faith or their negligence.

We have seen how Father Gonçalves insisted so strongly that finally, in 1937, he got Bishop da Silva to directly request Pope Pius XI for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and approval of the reparatory devotion. The last work of Father Martins, *Fatima e o Coração de Maria*, reveals to us that Father Aparicio was no less zealous in procuring approval for the devotion of the five first Saturdays of the month, and propagating the devotion.⁹⁴⁷ It is moving to witness his untiring efforts, brushing up against the Bishop of Leiria's disconcerting inertia... while war is already imminent...

During the summer of 1938, a disciple of Father Aparicio, Brother Pereira Gomes, wrote a tract on the reparatory devotion. On August 3, Bishop da Silva consented to give the *imprimatur*. But for lack of money and means, this good brother could not have it printed. In a letter of October 20, 1938, Father Aparicio then asked Bishop da Silva to entrust this matter to a priest of his diocese, or even better, to publish it in *Voz da Fatima*, which in one shot would have been a much better promotion for the first Saturdays.

However, on November 5, 1938, writing once more to the Bishop of Leiria, Father Aparicio observes that nothing was done: «*Since Your Excellency has said nothing to me regarding the printing of the tracts on the devotion of the five first Saturdays, I will see if I can find some other solution.*» Alas, Father

Aparicio obtained no response before leaving Portugal for his mission to Brazil, November 9, 1938.

On May 8, 1939, Bishop da Silva would finally approve and himself have some tracts printed, «but they spoke only in general terms on reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, without referring to the declarations and apparitions of Sister Lucy.»⁹⁴⁸

In the meantime, at Braga, the Apostleship of Prayer published a tract entitled «*The first Saturday of the month in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*». Unfortunately, however, once again there was no mention of the words of Our Lady and the Child Jesus during the Pontevedra apparitions, and the request for monthly confession was omitted!

For her part, Sister Lucy did everything she could, but she encountered the same obstacles, the same inertia. In the beginning of November 1938, Father Aparicio had given her the tract written by Brother Pereira Gomes. Sister Lucy sent it on to the Mother Provincial of the Dorotheans, who requested the imprimatur from the Bishop of Porto. Although this permission was granted, the affair dragged on. In her letters of May 21, 1939 to a friend, and June 20 to Father Aparicio, Sister Lucy indicated that nothing as yet had been done. «Because of her numerous duties», she explained to Father Aparicio on July 31, «the Mother Provincial could not occupy herself with it.»

Meanwhile Father Aparicio had found a vast field for the apostolate in Brazil. Still striving to overcome Bishop da Silva's reticence, he wrote him in the first few months of 1939:

«As soon as I arrived here (in the mission of Baturite, in the State of Ceara) on January 31, 1939, in every possible way I tried to promote devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, Mother and Patroness of Portugal, and devotion of the first Saturdays, which was well received by all and in all areas. There is a parish where on first Saturdays the number of communicants has risen to six hundred, in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

«A city in the interior of the State of Ceara has been almost completely transformed; through the mediation of Our Lady, very abundant graces have descended on this parish... The parish priest, very consoled, told me that what many missions had not done, Our Lady accomplished during these few blessed

days. Many souls who had completely abandoned the sacraments approached and were reconciled with God during these days. A man who had not gone to confession for forty years made his confession, to the astonishment and admiration of all...

«I gave conferences at Bahia, Recife, Fortaleza, Baturite, Aracati, Quixada, Varzea Alegre, Cajazeiras, and in all the chapels dependent on the parish of Baturite, where our Fathers will say Mass every month. There are twelve of them...»

Father Martins reports that «In May of 1939, Father Aparicio obtained that at Fortaleza, the capital of the State of Ceara, the religious of Saint Dorothy published a tract on the First Saturdays.» On August 10, 1939, he wrote to Father da Fonseca: «*The edition of the tract published by the Dorothean Sisters is already sold out. I am preparing an edition of my own; I already have the approval of the Reverend Vice-Provincial. It will have a circulation of five thousand copies.*»⁹⁴⁹

SECTION IV: Pius XII, «the Pope of Fatima»?

INTRODUCTION

For his episcopal jubilee in 1951, the Catholic people of the entire world offered Pope Pius XII the sum necessary for building a new church in Rome itself in honour of Pope Saint Eugene, the patron saint of the Sovereign Pontiff. The chapel of Our Lady was offered by the Portuguese, and dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. Two days after the consecration of the new basilica, the Pope received a small delegation of Portuguese pilgrims who had come to Rome for this occasion. He spoke to them about Fatima enthusiastically. He even dared to mention for the first time in an official discourse «*the providential coincidence*» which had marked his episcopal consecration on May 13, 1917, «at the very hour when, on the mountain of Fatima, the first apparition of the white-robed Queen of the Most Holy Rosary was announced.» At the end of the pontifical audience, one of the pilgrims exclaimed: «*Long live the Pope of Fatima!*» Pius XII answered with a smile, «*That's me!*»⁹⁵⁰

But was Pope Pius XII really «the Pope of Fatima»? It is enough to compare the extension of the Fatima message in 1939 – still strictly limited to Portugal alone – with the worldwide audience it enjoyed at the Pope's death in 1958, to measure the extent of his work in the service of Our Lady of Fatima. Gerard de Sede scornfully titles one of his chapters, «*Pius XII universalizes Fatima*». ⁹⁵¹ Well, as we will see, this expression is just and appropriate.

Yet, this definite and official favour Pope Pius XII had for Fatima was not the fruit of an immediate and official decision. First, he had to be approached several times by Fatima devotees, and there was a whole series of providential events, which led him little by little to encourage and approve the divine work of Fatima, and even to fulfil – at least partially – Our Lady's requests. We will see how from year to year the *Pastor Angelicus* became more and more “the Pope of Fatima”, until the high point was reached in the years 1948-1952.

It is a fascinating history, where miracles of grace are superabundant. Yet, at the same time the horizon continued to grow darker, for Pius XII did not fully accomplish Heaven's great designs either. Let us say it at the very outset: in the half-measures, in the definite though incomplete obedience to the requests of Fatima, we will find the surest key to this pontificate – a pontificate so dramatic and contrasting, and which bore such strangely dissimilar fruits. Two dates are enough to demonstrate this. In 1950, the triumph of the Immaculate Virgin, Her

glorious Assumption into Heaven, was proclaimed by the Sovereign Pontiff in an infallible decree. It was the high point, the apotheosis of the papacy in our modern times. But in 1960, barely two years after his death, the Secret of Our Lady – the Secret Pius XII had not dared, had not wished to read – was defiantly, scornfully, thrown into the famous “dark well” of silence and oblivion from which it has not since emerged. Meanwhile, within the Church, both the faith and the divine authority of the hierarchy infallibly proclaiming the truth in God’s name also began to be scorned, and ever more gravely contested...

Let us then follow the great stages of this long pontificate, step by step. An initial period, which goes from 1939 to 1942, culminates in the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. At this initial high point we will end our present volume of historical exposition. We will save for Volume III the later phases, which already are intimately linked to the history of the “Third Secret”, since Sister Lucy began writing it down between January 2-9, 1944.

CHAPTER XI

«NOW IS THE HOUR OF GOD'S JUSTICE OVER THE WORLD!» (1939 - 1942)

Against the war which had already been programmed by the machiavellian plotting of Hitler and Stalin – the crazy, racist and expansionist Germanism of the one, and the revolutionary Bolshevism of the other – the new Pope could do nothing, in spite of his well-advised attempts at diplomatic interventions. For its part, anti-national Judeo-Masonry wanted this conflict, and pushed the blind and irresponsible democracies of London and Paris into it. This horrible war, which had already *«begun in the reign of Pius XI»*, was the divine chastisement so justly merited by the crimes of vicious men, and still more by the lukewarmness and indocility of the “bad Catholics” Saint Bernadette had spoken of in 1870. Sister Lucy, placing herself humbly “at the table of sinners”, saw in these rigorous judgments of God the punishment *«for our great laxity and our negligence in responding to His requests»*. Chastisement it was, but it was also a pressing invitation to respond finally to His great designs in favour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In fact, during two years of the war, ten times more was done to fulfil Our Lady of Fatima's requests than during the seventeen years of Pius XI's pontificate!

I. THE APPROVAL OF THE DEVOTION OF REPARATION (SEPTEMBER 13, 1939)

Bishop da Silva had several reasons for passing from promises to action. First, there was the painful trial of bad health which had dangerously threatened him in July of 1939. Then there was the declaration of war on September 3, which may have led to fears that perhaps Portugal also might, in spite of itself, get sucked into the war. Finally, there was the promising dawn of the new pontificate, which gave some reason to believe that the Holy Father might be more favourable to Fatima.

During the pilgrimage of September 13, Bishop da Silva decided to inform the thousands of pilgrims at the Cova da Iria of the devotion of reparation on the five first Saturdays of the month. Shortly afterwards, he published it in *Voz da*

Fatima. Bishop da Silva wrote to Sister Lucy shortly after to inform her. He was clearly pleased at having finally accomplished this act, which had been requested by the seer for over ten years:

«On September 13, on the occasion of the homily of the Mass for the sick, I made public the devotion of the five first Saturdays, in the sanctuary. And in the October issue (of *Voz da Fatima*) an article on the same subject has been published recommending it. Since the review has a large circulation (about 380,000 copies), I can say that this devotion is now known not only in Portugal, but in many foreign regions as well.

«May God deign to accept our reparation, however small and poor it be, for the offences which give sorrow to the Heart of His Mother, the Most Holy Virgin Mary.»⁹⁵²

The news brought great joy to Sister Lucy; however, there was some regret as well. After reading the article in the *Voz da Fatima*, she was pained to see that Our Lady's requests were not explained with complete exactness. In a letter dated December 3, 1939, she opened up to Father Aparicio:

«His Grace says that the meditation can be done during the recitation of the Rosary. I have already received a letter from Father Gomes to ask me my opinion, since Our Lady's words seem to indicate that the meditation may be done separately.

«I did not want to answer without asking His Grace, the bishop. His Excellency answered me that he did this to make it easier for people to practice this devotion, for ordinary people are not used to meditating and don't know how to do it. Since Holy Church allows several obligatory prayers to be said during Mass (such as the penance given in confession, etc), and since the precept is satisfied in this way, he says the same thing is true in this case.

«However (Sister Lucy continues), *for whoever is able, the more perfect thing is to do each thing separately.*»⁹⁵³

Of course! And how can we not deplore the watering down of Our Lady's requests, which were already so simple and condescending, considering the wonderful promises attached to them? If the faithful do not know how to

meditate, does not their Heavenly Mother desire to teach it to them, and give them a taste for it through these fifteen minutes spent in Her company, so as to console Her outraged Heart, overwhelmed with bitterness by so much ingratitude on the part of Her children?

Another cause for regret: Bishop da Silva's act was still not *the official episcopal approval*, promised since 1928. The bishop had contented himself with recommending the devotion of reparation during the course of his sermon on September 13. Writing in the October issue of *Voz da Fatima*, the Vicomte of Montelo (Canon Formigao) had mentioned this fact. But the article published in this same issue to recommend and explain this devotion, although written by Bishop da Silva himself – besides being awkward and inexact on several points – was anonymous!⁹⁵⁴

Still, it was already a first step which caused Sister Lucy to rejoice: «Now, there is lacking only *the consecration of Russia by the Holy Father and all the bishops of the Catholic world*. Oh! If it were only granted to me to see His Holiness decide on this.»⁹⁵⁵

II. THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA (JANUARY - APRIL 1940)

Sister Lucy's letters to Father Gonçalves reveal to us an event of capital importance in the history of the passing on of the Fatima requests to Pope Pius XII. Curiously, the historians – and even Father Alonso in those of his writings which have already been published – do not seem to have noticed this fact: *an initial request for the consecration of Russia was addressed to the Holy Father in the spring of 1940*, most probably in April. There follow the documents which clearly establish it.

JANUARY 21, 1940: «THE REQUEST MUST BE RENEWED»

Just as in 1930, Father Gonçalves was effective. By January 21, 1940, he apparently had already decided to intervene once more. Sister Lucy wrote to him:

«You say that you would like to talk to me personally, and I wish that could

be done, but ordinarily Our Lord likes sacrifices a little better. It's because of sacrifice that many souls are saved, and so many of them are lost. Just to think about it makes me tremble with fear! Therefore, let Him ask of me anything He wants. Anything.

«Concerning what has been done and what is yet to be done (*I am speaking here about Russia and the Immaculate Heart of Mary*), I have been more or less told everything by Our Lord, His Excellency the Bishop and by Reverend Galamba, with whom I spoke some days ago.»⁹⁵⁶

THE LOST OPPORTUNITIES OF 1930 AND 1937. «I regret that despite the motion of the Holy Spirit, nobody took advantage of the opportunity. Our Lord also regrets it. *By this act He would have appeased His justice and forgiven the world the scourge of war that Russia is promoting among the nations since the war in Spain.* In a letter to His Excellency that I wrote from Rianjo, I said so in sufficiently clear terms.»⁹⁵⁷

THE REQUEST MUST BE RENEWED. «May God grant that this moment (the consecration of Russia) be hastened. God is so good that *He is always ready to exercise His mercy with us.* Therefore, it is the will of God that the request be renewed with the Holy See. Unless this act intervenes, through which intervention we would obtain peace, the war will only end when the blood spilled by the martyrs is enough to appease the Divine Justice.»⁹⁵⁸

Clearly, Sister Lucy is judging events in the light of the great Secret of July 13. The war she mentions is the war that Russia foists upon the world, the first phase of which took place in Spain. This is why the only remedy willed by God in His designs of love for our century is *the consecration of Russia* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary – the consecration of Russia, not the world.⁹⁵⁹

Had this consecration been done on time, the war would not have taken place. And, at the beginning of 1940, the seer also affirms that if the Holy Father deigned to accomplish Heaven's requests, God is so good that He still would have taken pity on humanity, and ended this atrocious war.

«*IF YOU ONLY KNEW THE THINGS WHICH ARE FOR YOUR PEACE!*»

In her conversation with Father Jongen, the seer confided this to him:

«In 1940, in another letter to His Grace the Bishop of Leiria, alluding to the non-fulfilment of Our Lady's requests, I wrote: "Oh! If the world only knew what a moment of grace was granted to it, and did penance!"»⁹⁶⁰

So striking is the parallel, that how can we not be reminded of the words Our Lord pronounced on the evening of Palm Sunday, weeping over the Holy City?

«If thou hadst known, in this thy day, even thou, the things that are for thy peace! *But now they are hidden from thy eyes.* For days will come upon thee when thy enemies will throw up a rampart about thee, and surround thee and shut thee in on every side, and will dash thee to the ground and thy children within thee, and will not leave in thee one stone upon another, because *thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.*» (Lk. 19:41-44).

At Fatima also, Heaven visited the earth, and the Mother of Mercy, the Queen of Peace, revealed to Her children the infallible means of obtaining a true and holy and lasting peace. Was the new Pope, so devoted to Our Lady, going to consent to enter into Her ways?

FEBRUARY - APRIL 1940: AN INITIAL REQUEST AND AN INITIAL REFUSAL

On April 24, 1940, Sister Lucy wrote to Father Gonçalves:

«Thank you for the letter you sent me, and thank you even more *for the means that you used to obtain the realization of Our Good Lord's wishes.*»⁹⁶¹

Father Gonçalves had the request for the consecration of Russia passed on by April at the latest, because he hoped that the Holy Father would be able to fulfil it in May 1940. We know this through a letter Sister Lucy wrote him on July 15:

«I thank you very much for your last letter. It must have gone through the mail at about the same time as one of mine, which I hope you have received. As for the consecration of Russia (to the Immaculate Heart of Mary), it was not done *in the month of May as you expected. It will be done, but not right away...*»⁹⁶²

“NOW IS THE HOUR OF GOD’S JUSTICE OVER THE WORLD.” During

these first few months of 1940, Sister Lucy states that it is necessary to insist with the Holy Father to obtain this consecration, that Our Lord's promises are still good, but that it will not be done right away, because the time for the chastisement has come. On April 24, she explains to Father Gonçalves:

«If (Our Good Lord) wants to, He can hasten that cause. *But to punish the world He will let it go slowly.* His justice, provoked by our sins, wants it that way. Sometimes He becomes annoyed not only at grave sins, but also at our laxity and *negligence in attending to His requests.*»

Sister Lucy goes on, humbly placing herself in the ranks of sinners who have drawn down God's chastisement:

«In this respect I am greatly to blame because of my shyness and reserve. Talk to Him for a while and you will see what He says. How many just complaints He has, to which we cannot answer anything except to ask for forgiveness and this in intimate conversation (with Him)!

«He's right, there are many crimes, *but above all there is much more negligence now on the part of the souls, whom He expected to do His work with fervour. The number of souls with whom He communicates is very limited.* The worst part is that I'm in that group of lukewarm people, after the efforts that He has made to incorporate me in the group of those more fervent. It is very easy for me to make a promise, but it is even easier for me to break it... Dust sticks to actions like it does to (clothes), without one seeing how it got there...»⁹⁶³

On July 15, 1940, she wrote to Father Gonçalves again:

«As for the consecration of Russia (to the Immaculate Heart of Mary), it was not done in the month of May as you expected. *It will be done, but not right away. God wants it this way for now to punish the world for its crimes. We deserve it.* Afterwards He will listen to our humble prayers.

«I am really sorry that it was not done. In the meantime so many souls are being lost! However, God is the One who governs everything. But at the same time He shows so much sorrow because He was not attended to!

«If I am not mistaken, *He is still willing to grant the promised grace. How I wish that people would heed His wishes!* I never cease to pray and to

sacrifice myself for this intention, and I thank you very much for your prayers and sacrifices for this same purpose. With that, you please the Heart of our beloved Heavenly Mother who will not forget to recompense you for it...

«Your trip then is to Africa instead of Tuy? *How Our Good Lord likes sacrifice! How He likes the souls who always say “Yes” to Him!* I will pray that He grant you a good trip and a prolific apostolate. I hope that you will not forget me in your prayers. The grace that I need most is that one of corresponding with fidelity and humility to so many graces. I hope that you will not forget to pray for me, close to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.»⁹⁶⁴

Appointed for the missions in Zambia, Father Gonçalves did not leave Portugal until a year later, during the summer of 1941.⁹⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Sister Lucy continued to profit from his counsels and confide in him. Let us quote as well her letter of August 18, 1940, where she insists on him continuing to ask the Pope for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

AUGUST 18, 1940: THE SENTIMENTS OF A HOLY SOUL DURING THE TORMENTS OF WAR

GOD NEEDS SOULS WHO WILL GIVE THEMSELVES TO HIM WITHOUT RESERVE. «I am on the third day of the retreat, and God did not wish to grant us the joy of making it under your direction. Patience! I was never encouraged by this hope because that was not the road that God wanted me to follow; ordinarily He prefers sacrifice, and *in the state that the world is in now, what He wants are souls who, united with Him, will pray and sacrifice themselves.* How I wish I could satisfy this burning desire of His Divine Heart. But, unfortunately, I often correspond to inspirations of His grace with many infidelities. *Now, more than ever, He needs souls that will give themselves to Him without reserve; and how small this number is!* In this respect pray for me, I really need it...»

THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA: IT IS NOT FOR NOW. «I suppose that it pleases Our Lord to know that someone tries to get from His Vicar on earth the realization of His wishes. *But the Holy Father will not do it yet.* He doubts its reality and he is right.⁹⁶⁶ Our Good Lord could through some

prodigy show clearly that it is He who asks it, but He takes this opportunity to punish the world with His justice for so many crimes, and to prepare it for a more complete turn toward Him.»

PORTUGAL, THE EXEMPLARY MIRACLE. «The proof that He gives us is the special protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary over Portugal, due to its consecration to Her. Those people whom you write to me about have a good reason to be scared. All this would have happened to us, had our bishops not paid attention to the requests of Our Good Lord, and prayed with all their heart for His mercy and the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Blessed Heavenly Mother.

«But in our country there are still many crimes and sins, and since *now is the hour of God's justice over the world*, we need to keep on praying.»

AN URGENT APPEAL TO CONVERSION. «For this reason I feel that it would be good to impress on people, as well as a great amount of confidence in the mercy of Our Good Lord and in the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, *the need for prayer accompanied by sacrifice*, especially the sacrifices needed to avoid sin.

«This is the request of Our Good Heavenly Mother since 1917, that came with an inexplicable sadness and tenderness from Her Immaculate Heart: *“Let them offend Our Lord God no more for He is already too much offended!”* It's a pity that we have not meditated enough on these words and measured their full implications!»

THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA MUST BE RENEWED. «In the meantime, don't forget, whenever you can, to take advantage of any occasions that you may have to renew our request to the Holy Father to see if we can shorten this moment (of waiting and of punishment). I feel sorry for the Holy Father and I pray a lot for His Holiness through my humble prayers and sacrifices.

«Please do not forget me in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In my prayers you will also not be forgotten...»⁹⁶⁷

III. THE REQUEST FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD

WITH MENTION OF RUSSIA

Until this time, to obey the very clear and firm requests of July 13, 1917 and June 13, 1929, Sister Lucy never asked for anything except *the consecration of Russia* alone to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In the collection of letters already published, she mentions *the consecration of the world* for the first time on September 1, 1940, writing to Father Aparicio. Nor is it mentioned as something Our Lady Herself had requested to her. She writes:

«Recently, several important people have spoken about *the consecration of the world and Russia* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. His Holiness showed that he was very favourable, but it seems that *it will not be done right away*. Oh, who will give me to see this moment (of waiting) shortened, and to see His Holiness raise the feast in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the rank of double of the first class, for the Universal Church! Pray for all that, for the glory of Our Good Lord and Our Good Heavenly Mother.»⁹⁶⁸

Are we to see in this letter, which unfortunately is not given in full, a reference to the initiatives Sister Lucy was soon to mention while writing to Pope Pius XII? It is quite possible. After having recalled the Tuy request, the seer wrote:

«... Some time afterwards I told this to my confessor who took measures to bring it to the attention of H.H. Pius XI and, latterly, to that of Your Holiness, through *His Excellency the Bishop of Macau, in June of this year, 1940. A little later, I believe, the Reverend Father Gonzaga da Fonseca was kind enough to renew this request before Your Holiness, who deigned to receive it in all his kindness.*»⁹⁶⁹

What were the exact terms of the requests of Bishop Costa Nunes and Father da Fonseca? We are not in a position to say. However, the reference by Sister Lucy allows us to think that, after the fruitless attempt in April 1940, they had given up on the idea of asking for the consecration of Russia alone by the Pope and all the bishops of the world, as specified in the exact requests of Our Lady.⁹⁷⁰

SISTER LUCY'S LETTER TO POPE PIUS XII

What is certain is that in September-October 1940, Lucy's spiritual directors

decided to attempt approaching the Holy Father once more, while adding to the precise Tuy request another request, which in their judgment could more easily be obtained: the consecration of the world, with special mention of Russia.

It is important, however, to stress from the beginning: this initiative did not come from the seer, but from Don Manuel Ferreira, Bishop of Gurza. He had known Sister Lucy since her days at Asilo del Vilar, had stayed in touch with her and continued to advise her.⁹⁷¹ After discussing the matter with Father Gonçalves, Bishop Ferreira, who knew Pius XII personally, judged that it would be good if Sister Lucy wrote to the Pope herself.

SISTER LUCY RECEIVES THE ORDER TO WRITE. As she makes clear in the introduction to the letter, without this formal order she never would have dared to appeal directly to him. She never fails to insist on this point: if she did so, and in the terms that she used, it is because she had received the order to do so. On October 27, she wrote to Father Gonçalves:

«I received your letter as well as those of His Excellency the Bishop of Gurza. I got a bit scared with *that order*. Who am I, I asked myself, to write to the Holy Father? But I left all the reasons to Our Good Lord Who was asking it of me through His ministers. And, in the knowledge of my true incapacity, I tried to obey *in the way that was indicated to me*, without any preoccupations. Nobody expects anything better from me, for everybody knows my insufficiency.»⁹⁷²

What precise directives did she receive then? First of all, the revelation of the Secret. While recalling this letter, where Father Gonçalves «ordered» her «to write to the Holy Father», Sister Lucy made this clear: «One of the points he indicated to me was revealing the Secret.»⁹⁷³ She was surely ordered as well to describe the apparitions of Pontevedra and Tuy, but briefly! Above all, he indicated the terms of the essential request: a consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with special mention of Russia. Sister Lucy would have never expressed this request on her own initiative, since she had not been ordered to do so by Heaven. It surely threw her into great perplexity. But as always, to find her light, she had recourse to a more earnest prayer.

THE DIVINE COMMUNICATION OF OCTOBER 22, 1940. Here is the brief account which Sister Lucy retraced for Father Gonçalves, and recopied herself six months later.

«22-10-1940 – I received a letter from Father J. B. G. and the Bishop of Gurza telling me to write to His Holiness... With this purpose in view, I spent two hours on my knees before Our Lord exposed in the Blessed Sacrament: “Pray for the Holy Father, sacrifice yourself so that his courage does not succumb under the bitterness that oppresses him. The tribulation will continue and augment. I will punish the nations for their crimes by war, famine and persecution of My Church and this will weigh especially upon My Vicar on earth. *His Holiness will obtain an abbreviation of these days of tribulation if he takes heed of My wishes by promulgating the Act of Consecration of the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with a special mention of Russia.*”»⁹⁷⁴

What then were Heaven’s designs? The consecration of the world or the consecration of Russia? This question has been endlessly muddled. It is important that it be clear:

1. At Fatima in 1917, as well as at Tuy in 1929, the Most Holy Virgin, speaking in the name of God, asked for only one consecration: the consecration of Russia by the Holy Father and all the bishops of the Catholic world. And as we have seen, until Lucy’s letter of July 15, 1940, that was the only consecration ever in question.
2. The revelation of October 22, 1940, therefore indicates a request which was both completely new and secondary in the context of the principal message of Fatima, which remained definitively centred around the consecration and conversion of Russia. As Father Alonso comments: «In October of 1940, Heaven acceded to the desires of Sister Lucy’s superiors, to see the consecration of the world with a special mention of Russia brought about. It is the Lord Himself who suggests such an act.»⁹⁷⁵

But the promise connected with this act is completely different and much more limited: while the consecration of Russia would have brought about its conversion and preserved the world from war, the consecration of the world now suggested would obtain nothing more than «an abbreviation of these days of tribulation» of the world war.

For the future, while writing down this new request in obedience to her superiors, Sister Lucy could have the certitude that she was not displeasing her Lord. In His infinite kindness, He even benevolently accepted this first solemn

act of trust and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The act was limited, partial, and incomplete, but it was already to obtain graces of peace for the world.

THE WRITING OF THE LETTER TO THE POPE. Having been enlightened from on high in this way, Sister Lucy was able to take up her pen and begin writing the letter. She did so two days later, on October 24, 1940. The terms and conditions of this letter will be explained later on. Three days later Sister Lucy explained to Father Gonçalves:

«I wanted to send it directly to the Bishop of Gurza, but I didn't dare to do it without first making it fully known to the Reverend Mother Provincial and the Bishop of Leiria.»⁹⁷⁶

Along with the text she had just written, she added the letters of Father Gonçalves ordering her to write it. She sent the whole thing to her Provincial Superior, asking her to send it to Bishop da Silva, who in turn was asked to send it to the Bishop of Gurza.

In her letter of October 27 to Father Gonçalves, she explained to him that she greatly regretted the delay occasioned by this long “detour”. «But», she added, «*Our Lord will prefer that this act be approved by my immediate superiors.*» What supernatural wisdom in these statements and what scrupulous obedience! Sister Lucy never falls back on her role as seer to act in the slightest way outside of religious obedience. Besides, this is one of the essential elements of the mystery of Fatima. God is disposed to release a shower of graces over the Church and the world through the mediation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but He wishes to do nothing unless His hierarchical representatives desire it and insistently request it of Him. Sister Lucy is well aware of it: she is only the humble messenger of Heaven; it is her superiors, the Pope and the bishops, and them alone, who can act decisively for the salvation and peace of the world.

Let us continue reading the letter to Father Gonçalves, pointing out the humility and simplicity of the seer, at the very time that she was called to pass on God's will to the Pope:

«I doubt that the letter is in good enough condition to send to Rome, because of my way of expression, my spelling mistakes, and the quality of paper on which I wrote it. Because the bishop told me to write it on a single

sheet, I did all I could to find one good enough both in quality and size; but since among the things that are lacking here, the one that is becoming the most scarce is paper, I could not find anything better. I did not incorporate more detail and accuracy because I did not have enough space on the single sheet of paper that I had obtained. I hope that Our Good Lord will accept my humble sacrifice for the glory of the Immaculate Heart of Our Blessed Mother in Heaven.

«*The Holy Father will make the act of consecration as we so anxiously desire, but I don't think that it will be on the 8th.*⁹⁷⁷ *We will have to wait a little longer, but it will overflow in glory for Our Good Lord and Our Beloved Mother in Heaven.*

«Are you still getting ready for your trip to Zambezia? I wanted to ask Our Lord to prevent it, but I will not ask for it. His Will be done, no matter what it costs.»

Since she had sent with her letter a copy of her request to the Pope, Sister Lucy concluded:

«If you have anything to tell me about the letter to the Holy Father, feel free to say it.»⁹⁷⁸

Weeks passed. Had the letter been sent to Rome? Written in a very direct and spontaneous style, with a perfect clarity, the initial text of the seer was the best one, and even the most apt to touch the Holy Father's heart. Unfortunately, things took a very different turn. Sister Lucy was forced to make a series of corrections, which, alas, were almost all deplorable! In 1971, Father Alonso still preferred to leave the author of these unfortunate retouches in anonymity, writing: «Many, perhaps, will want to know how Sister Lucy's thinking could be deformed so badly. We cannot speak on this subject for the moment.»⁹⁷⁹

Since Father Martins in 1973 took the happy initiative of publishing important excerpts from Sister Lucy's letters in *Memorias e Cartas da Irma Lucia*, this point can be fully cleared up.

THE INTERVENTION OF BISHOP DA SILVA. Around the end of November, or even perhaps on December 1, Sister Lucy finally received an answer from the Bishop of Leiria. He asked her «*to write another letter to the Holy Father with*

some modifications in the introduction and the end.»⁹⁸⁰ He even added a model which indicated the corrections to be done.

A letter of Sister Lucy to Father Aparicio on December 16, 1940, sums everything up in a few phrases:

«*I have been ordered* to write a letter to His Holiness Pius XII, explaining Our Lady's request on the consecration of the world and Russia to Her Immaculate Heart. *I obeyed* on October 24, 1940. *I have been ordered* to write a second letter with some small modifications. *I wrote it* on December 2, 1940. In the same letter His Grace the bishop (of Leiria) ordered me... etc.»⁹⁸¹

In another place Sister Lucy presents her second copy as «the final copy of Bishop (da Silva's) draft.»⁹⁸²

For this reason it is important to distinguish the two successive versions, each of which has its own value: the first one, because it exactly expresses Sister Lucy's thinking. The second one, because it was read by Pope Pius XII.⁹⁸³ As she had done for her first writing, Sister Lucy took the trouble to make a copy of her final text, so that Father Gonçalves might see it. These are the two manuscript copies published in Documentos, for which we now give literal translations in parallel columns.⁹⁸⁴

SISTER LUCY'S LETTER TO POPE PIUS XII

THE VERSION OF OCTOBER 24, 1940	THE VERSION OF DECEMBER 2, 1940
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1. ADDRESS TO THE HOLY FATHER

Most Holy Father,

I never thought of writing to Your Holiness because I recognize my incapacity and insufficiency. But, since the persons that speak to me in the name of Our Lord (one

Most Holy Father,

Humbly prostrate at your feet, I come as the last sheep of the fold entrusted to you to open my heart, by order of my spiritual director.

of whom is His Excellency, the Bishop of Gurza, whom you know personally), tell me that it is the Divine Will... Therefore in an act of humble submission I do it in the way that has been shown to me, with the confidence and simplicity with which I would speak to my good father, or better still, to Our Good Lord. And because Your Holiness represents Him so directly to me, I hope you will forgive me the faults I have, due to my incapacity.

I am the only survivor of the children to whom Our Lady appeared in Fatima (Portugal) from the 13th of May to the 13th of October, 1917. The Blessed Virgin has granted me many graces, the greatest of all being my admission to the Institute of Saint Dorothy. (Up to now, this is a copy of the outline the bishop sent me.)

2. A REQUEST FROM HEAVEN

Most Holy Father, I come to renew a request that has been brought to Your Holiness several times already, *and previously to His Holiness Pius XI, and which has been received with the benevolence of both.*

The request, Most Holy Father, *is not mine*, it comes from Our Lord and Our Good Heavenly Mother.

I come, Most Holy Father, to renew a request that has already been brought to you several times.

The request, Most Holy Father, is from Our Lord and Our Good Mother in Heaven.

3. THE SECRET OF JULY 13, 1917

In 1917, in Fatima, in the portion of revelations designated by us with the name of “secret”, the Blessed Virgin announced the end of the war that was then afflicting Europe, and predicted a future one *that would begin in the reign of Pius XI*. To prevent this war She said: «I will come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays. If they listen to My requests, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not,

In 1917, in the portion of the apparitions that we have designated “the secret”, the Blessed Virgin revealed the end of the war that was then afflicting Europe, and predicted another forthcoming, saying that to prevent it She would come and ask for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart as well as the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays. She promised peace and the

she will spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. *In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me and it will be converted, and a certain period of peace will be granted to the world.*»

Most Holy Father, this remained a secret until 1926, according to the express will of Our Good Heavenly Mother.

4. THE MESSAGE OF PONTEVEDRA

Then, in a revelation, She asked that the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays of five consecutive months be propagated throughout the world, with its conditions of doing the following with the same purpose: going to confession, meditating for a quarter of an hour on the mysteries of the Rosary and saying the Rosary with the aim of making reparation for the insults, sacrileges and indifferences committed against Her Immaculate Heart. Our Good Heavenly Mother promises to assist the persons who will practise this devotion, in the hour of their death, with all the necessary graces for their salvation.

I told this to my confessor who tried to have the wishes of the Immaculate Heart of Mary fulfilled. But only on the 13th of September 1939 did His Excellency, the

conversion of that nation if Her request was attended to. She announced that otherwise this nation would spread her errors throughout the world, and there would be wars, persecutions of the Holy Church, martyrdom of many Christians, several persecutions and sufferings reserved for Your Holiness, and the annihilation of several nations.

Most Holy Father, this, remained a secret until 1926, according to the express order of Our Lady.

Then, in a revelation, She asked that the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays of five consecutive months be propagated throughout the world, with its conditions of doing the following with the same purpose: going to confession, meditating for a quarter of an hour on the mysteries of the Rosary and saying the Rosary with the aim of making reparation for the insults, sacrileges and indifferences committed against Her Immaculate Heart. Our Good Heavenly Mother promises to assist the persons who will practice this devotion, in the hour of their death, with all the necessary graces for their salvation.

Bishop of Leiria, make public in Fatima this request of Our Lady.

I take this opportunity, Most Holy Father, to ask you to bless and extend this devotion to the whole world.

I made known the request of Our Lady to my confessor, who tried to have it fulfilled, but only on the 13th of September 1939 did His Excellency, the Bishop of Leiria, make public in Fatima this request of Our Lady.

I take this opportunity, Most Holy Father, to ask you to bless and extend this devotion to the whole world.

5. THE MESSAGE OF TUY

In 1929 through another apparition Our Lady told me, «*The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops of the world, to make the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart. He promises to save it by this means.*»

Some time afterwards I told this to my confessor who took measures to bring it to the attention of His Holiness Pius XI and, latterly, to that of Your Holiness, through His Excellency the Bishop of Macau, in June of this year, 1940. A little later, I believe, the Reverend Father Gonzaga da Fonseca was kind enough to renew this request before Your Holiness, who deigned to receive it in all his kindness.

In 1929, through another apparition, Our Lady asked for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart, promising its conversion through this means and the hindering of the propagation of its errors.

Sometime afterwards I told my confessor of the request of Our Lady. He employed certain means to fulfil it by making it known to His Holiness Pius XI.

6. THE CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD WITH A MENTION OF RUSSIA

Most Holy Father, Our Good Lord in several intimate communications has not stopped insisting on this request, and He

In several intimate communications Our Lord has not stopped insisting on this request, and He finally

finally promised that, if Your Holiness will consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with a special mention of Russia,

He will shorten the days of tribulation with which He has decided to punish the world for its crimes, through war, famine and the persecution of the Church and Your Holiness

promised that, if Your Holiness will make the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with a special mention of Russia, *and order that in union with Your Holiness all the bishops of the world also do this at the same time*, He will shorten the days of tribulation with which He has decided to punish the nations for their crimes, through war, famine, and various persecutions of the Holy Church and Your Holiness

7. THE BITTERNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS

Sometimes in His communications our good Lord seems to be so grieved at the loss of such a great number of souls, and at the persecutions you suffer most, and have yet to suffer! Because I feel in part the grief of His Sacred Heart, I couldn't keep silent and I have revealed this feeling in several private letters to His Excellency, the Bishop of Leiria.

I truly feel your sufferings, Most Holy Father! And, as much as I can through my humble prayers and sacrifices, I try to lessen them, close to Our Lord and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

8. A SPECIAL PROTECTION PROMISED TO PORTUGAL

Most Holy Father, if in the union of my soul with God I have not been deceived by *some illusion*, Our Lord promises a special protection to our *little nation* due to the consecration made by the Portuguese Prelates to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as proof of the graces that would have been granted to other nations, had they also consecrated themselves to Her.

Most Holy Father, if in the union of my soul with God I have not been deceived, Our Lord promises a special protection to our country *during this war*, due to the consecration of the nation, by the Portuguese Prelates, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; as proof of the graces that would have been granted to other nations, had they also consecrated themselves to Her

9. THESE ARE HEAVEN'S DESIRES

It seems to me, Most Holy Father, that I am not mistaken, for God makes Himself felt so really in my soul that it is impossible to doubt.

I believe, Most Holy Father, that I have said everything that is enough to make known to you the requests of Our Good Lord and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

10. THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Now, Most Holy Father, allow me to make one more request. This one is only an ardent desire of my heart: that the feast in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary be extended to the whole world as one of the main feasts of the Holy Church.

Now, Most Holy Father, allow me to make one more request. This one is only an ardent desire of my heart: that the feast in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary be extended to the whole world as one of the main feasts of the Holy Church.

11. THE HOPE OF A FAVOURABLE AND PROMPT RECEPTION

These requests, Most Holy Father, are worth nothing insofar as they come from me, but for what they are as an expression of the Divine Will, I hope that they will find in Your Holiness a favourable and prompt reception.

12. REQUEST FOR THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING

In my humble prayers, I never cease to pray for Your Holiness.

Humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, I ask for the Apostolic Blessing.

With the deepest respect and reverence I ask for the Apostolic Blessing.

HOLINESS, I ASK FOR THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING.

*With the deepest respect I humbly and
reverently kiss the feet of Your Holiness.*

The least daughter of Holy Church,

Maria Lucia de Jesus
Religious of Saint Dorothy
Tuy, Spain, October 24, 1940

May God protect Your Holiness!

Tuy (Spain), December 2, 1940
Maria Lucia de Jesus

Sister Lucy humbly protested her lack of ability and insufficiency, but in vain. Her letter is constructed with a perfect logic, a great clarity in the exposition of the facts and a remarkable precision in formulating various requests.⁹⁸⁵

Bishop da Silva's corrections are almost all unfortunate. By way of contrast, they also underline the qualities of Sister Lucy's original version. The tone is more personal, and here and there the most intimate and powerful sentiments animating the seer discreetly stand out: her supreme resolve to obey God's representatives in all things (No. 1), her firm certitude that she is speaking in the name of God and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Nos. 2, 9 and 11), the recalling of her unceasing efforts to make Heaven's decrees known and fulfilled, efforts which up to then had been unfruitful. And when she brings up the loss of souls or the sufferings of the Holy Father – we will see in fact that, a few weeks after this letter was written, the Pope himself in one of his discourses mentioned the immense sadness overwhelming him at that moment – it is in reference to the bitterness which all these evils inflict on the Sacred Heart of Jesus (No. 7). Finally, repeating the admirable phrase of Saint Teresa of Avila, she signs herself: «The least daughter of Holy Church.» (No. 12).

How can we not regret that all these personal traits were erased or banalized in the final version? That being said, let us go on to the essential part, which forms the very object of this letter.

THE REVELATION OF THE SECRET

This date, October 24, 1940, when Sister Lucy put on paper the exact text of the

second part of the Secret, marks an important date in the history of Fatima. Perhaps she had written it before for one or another of her confessors, but these texts have not been preserved for us. Indeed the letter to Pope Pius XII, in its original version, gives us the first literal transcripts of the great Secret.

It is literal, but still incomplete, for two reasons. Sister Lucy soon explained in her Third Memoir: «In order not to make my letter too long, since I was told to keep it short, I confined myself to the essentials, leaving it to God to provide a more favourable opportunity.»⁹⁸⁶ For this reason the vision of hell – which alone would have taken up a good part of the sheet of paper she was allotted! – was not cited.

Thus the Secret was amputated in its very first part by the excessively strict directives for brevity imposed by the Bishop of Gurza. It was even more gravely mutilated by Bishop da Silva's corrections. First of all, the indirect style is substituted for the exact words of Our Lady. What an unfortunate choice of style! For this indirect voice gives the impression that something is being summarized and even censored, perhaps because one cannot dare to say the whole thing. The force of the Fatima prophecy, so remarkable for its laconic structure, is considerably diminished.

Again, what a shame that the Bishop of Leiria suppressed the conclusion, the unconditional announcement of the final triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which is the precious pearl of the Secret of Fatima, the wonderful source of unshakeable hope. The Holy Father did not learn of these words until two years later. Why were they censored? No doubt because they give prominence to the consecration of Russia as the preliminary condition for obtaining world peace. Now Bishop da Silva thought precisely that it was not fitting to insist on anything to do with Russia.

HEAVEN'S THREE REQUESTS

THE MESSAGE OF PONTEVEDRA (1925-1926). With conciseness and clarity, Sister Lucy presents first of all the devotion of reparation on the five first Saturdays of the month. Fortunately, this whole passage did not suffer a single correction. Not even the regretful conclusion: «But only on the 13th of September 1939 did His Excellency, the Bishop of Leiria, make public in Fatima this request of Our Lady.» Alas, the bishop could be sure that Rome would never

reproach him for his long inertia! On the contrary: what he had to fear for fifteen years was taking initiatives which risked causing dissatisfaction in high places.

Sister Lucy concludes by asking the Holy Father to approve and bless the devotion of reparation. Is this «a simple desire on her part», as Father Alonso suggests?⁹⁸⁷ It would not seem so. Instead, it is the passing on of a request Heaven had expressed since 1930.⁹⁸⁸ The request still had not been heard, but it stood.

THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA AND THE CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD. For lack of space, Sister Lucy was unable to describe the apparition of June 13, 1929. Nevertheless, she reports Our Lady's exact words, which forcefully express the solemn and irrevocable character of the request for the consecration of Russia. She also clearly distinguishes the successive requests: the principal one, the request of 1917 and 1929, concerning Russia alone, and the second request, which was more recent and secondary, concerning the consecration of the world.

In addition to the unfortunate substitution – once more – of the indirect style for the very words of Our Lady, with astonishing audacity Bishop da Silva dared to arrange everything his own way, introducing the most regrettable confusion into the conditions proper to each one of Heaven's requests. For the essential act, which is the consecration of Russia, Our Lady willed that the Holy Father order all the bishops to do it in union with himself. On the contrary, the request of October 22, 1940, concerning the consecration of the world, was addressed to the Pope, and to him alone. Bishop da Silva actually permitted himself to reverse the conditions. He omitted the necessary union of the bishops with the Pope in the request for Russia's consecration, and he added it to the request for the consecration of the world.

In spite of everything, let us point out that Bishop da Silva had an excuse: As Father Alonso explains, he was surely moved «by the praiseworthy desire of facilitating the realization of a consecration presented as being difficult to obtain on the part of the Holy See. The fruitless attempts in the past proved it.⁹⁸⁹ Indeed, it must not be forgotten that Pope Pius XI in 1930 and 1937, and Pius XII himself in April of 1940, learned originally of the exact, precise requests of Our Lady of Fatima. It was only later, subsequent to their refusal or their silence, that lower authorities permitted themselves to water down the conditions imposed by Heaven.

Still, we may regret that the Portuguese bishops did not have the courage to continue to present to the Holy Father, with perseverance, the same requests of the Queen of Heaven, without changing anything. But they undoubtedly thought that such a pressing insistence was inappropriate.

Finally, let us point out Sister Lucy's tranquil assurance in this letter to Pope Pius XII: she explains to the Holy Father as a certainty the promise of a special protection for Portugal during the war, due to the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by all the bishops of the country. At the moment she was writing, nothing appeared less certain. On the contrary, the war looked as though it was about to draw all nations into a whirlpool of hateful and homicidal passions.

IV. PORTUGAL IN THE FACE OF THE WAR: CONVERSION AND EXPIATION, CONDITIONS FOR PEACE

While writing to the Pope, Sister Lucy explains the wonderful promise in favour of the "Land of Holy Mary", and nothing more. But at the same time, we will see her intervene on several occasions in the country's life to fulfil her mission as Heaven's messenger, and in Heaven's name invite the country to prayer and penance.

For the miraculous peace Our Lady wanted to grant to Her little privileged nation had to be merited by the only means capable of obtaining it: conversion and expiation. Peace cannot be granted to a careless people, growing worse in its sins, and lulled to sleep by divine favours and the passing act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

There is nothing magical or automatic about the efficacy of this consecration. It is supernatural. It acts upon the hearts of men. First, it gives the bishops the grace of hearing the warnings of Heaven with docility, and then the grace of leading their peoples to conform to them. It is a miracle so much more beautiful, more complete, a profusion of graces which procures at once all good things, eternal ones and temporal ones as well. Thus the world war was a time of earnest supplications, of fervour, and of conversions for a threatened Portugal. This was thanks to the voice of its Pastors, always faithful in hearing Heaven's voice.

THE VOW TO CHRIST THE KING. On April 20, 1940, the Portuguese bishops meeting at Fatima made a solemn vow to erect at Lisbon a great statue to Christ

the King, if their country was spared from the war.⁹⁹⁰ Since their request was heard, they kept their promise and put up the colossal statue of the Almada, which still towers over the capital today.

THE RENEWAL OF THE CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY. In December of 1940, at the moment when the German menace became more immediate, Sister Lucy intervened, with the permission of Father Gonçalves and Bishop da Silva. Here is the letter she wrote on December 1, 1940, to Cardinal Cerejeira:

«By order of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Msgr. da Silva, I come to ask Your Eminence to renew the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the 8th of December next, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in union with all the Portuguese Prelates, a consecration that was made in Fatima some years ago.

«This is not an express request of Our Blessed Mother in Heaven, but it is an act that I am sure will please Her, and that will attract over our country special favours from Her Immaculate Heart. It would please Her very much if all the parish priests would unite themselves with you in this act. I ask Your Eminence to bless, etc.»⁹⁹¹

One week later, all the Portuguese bishops, grouped around the Cardinal Patriarch in the Cathedral of Lisbon, solemnly renewed their act of consecration of the nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which had already been pronounced in 1931 and 1938.

WHAT HEAVEN ASKS FOR: THE CONVERSION OF SOULS, AND ESPECIALLY OF RELIGIOUS SOULS

Although Portugal did not itself experience the terrible rigours of the chastisement, Our Lord willed that it too learn the lesson of the chastisement of war: all were to recognize it as a call to conversion. As Lucy wrote on August 18, 1940: «... But in our country there are still many crimes and sins, and since now is the hour of God's justice over the world, we need to keep on praying.»⁹⁹²

THE BITTERNESS AND COMPLAINTS OF JESUS AND MARY. On December 1, 1940, Sister Lucy sets forth once more the secret disclosures of her

divine Spouse, to her confessor:

«But in spite of this, the Hearts of Our Good Lord and Our Good Heavenly Mother are sad and grieved.⁹⁹³ Portugal in its majority does not correspond either to Their graces or love. They (the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary) frequently complain about the sinful life of the majority of the people, even of those who call themselves practising Catholics.

«But above all, He complains very much about the lukewarm, indifferent and extremely comfortable life of the majority of the priests and members of religious congregations. The number of souls He meets through sacrifice and the inner life of love is extremely small and limited.

«These confidences lacerate my heart mainly because I am one of those unfaithful souls. Our Lord never ceases to show me the mountain of my imperfections, which I recognize with immense confusion...

«Nevertheless, Our Lord goes on communicating with my soul. He seems concerned about the destiny of some countries and wishes to save Portugal, but she is guilty too.»⁹⁹⁴

THE REVELATION OF NOVEMBER 28, 1940: OUR LORD ASKS FOR PUBLIC DAYS OF PRAYER AND PENANCE. Every Thursday night, Sister Lucy had permission to remain in the chapel until midnight, in conformity with the Sacred Heart's requests to Saint Margaret Mary. Sister Lucy was scrupulously faithful to this practice. Usually it was during these hours of solitude and the most intense recollection that God communicated Himself to her. «Ordinarily, after having confounded me in my own nothingness and misery, making me feel what in me is displeasing to Him, He continues by lamenting various things which afflict Him so much in the poor world.»⁹⁹⁵

«If I have not been mistaken, Our Lord told me on Thursday at eleven p.m. "If the Portuguese Government in union with all the bishops order (sic) penance and public prayers to be done on the streets and abolish the pagan festivities in these coming days of carnival, they would attract graces of peace over Portugal and over all Europe."»⁹⁹⁶

«If you can do something in this matter and if for that you need use of this letter, you have my consent. I'm very sorry for such an annoyance.»⁹⁹⁷

It suffices to reread the account of the carnival festivities even in the tiniest hamlet of the Serra de Aire⁹⁹⁸, to grasp the exact implications of Our Lord's urgent request. While the war was ravaging Europe, the feasting and traditional balls were less admissible than ever in the "Land of Holy Mary".

There is another very remarkable detail. Our Lord willed that it be the government who intervened in accord with the bishops, thus blessing and consecrating the harmonious union between the two powers. This is just as it was in the Christendom of old, and in spite of the modern laicism which is gradually creeping into everybody's minds, even that of the excellent Father Gonçalves, who on this point was in contradiction with the views of Heaven! In effect, in his response to her letter of December 1, he asked Sister Lucy to write to the Patriarch again, but without mentioning the participation of the government. She did so on December 19, 1941:

«Your Eminence Cardinal Patriarch,⁹⁹⁹

«... Our Lord is dissatisfied and grieved with the sins of the world and of Portugal. He complains about the lack of correspondence, the sinful life of the people, and especially about the lukewarmness, indifference and extremely comfortable life of the majority of the priests and members of religious organizations. The number of souls He meets through prayer and sacrifice is extremely small.

«In reparation for itself and for the other nations, Our Lord wants the profane festivities of carnival to be abolished in Portugal and be substituted by prayers and sacrifices, with public prayers said on the streets. I ask Your Eminence therefore to promote them in union with all the Portuguese bishops.¹⁰⁰⁰

«It would be good at this time not to forget that, when Our Lord promised a special protection over our nation, He said that it was guilty as well, and announced that it too would suffer something. This something will consist of consequences of foreign wars, which could become more or less serious, according to our correspondence to the wishes of Our Lord. Our Lord wants us to attract peace in this way not only over Portugal, but also over other nations. I ask you with the deepest respect to bless Your Eminence's most humble servant.»¹⁰⁰¹

Remarkably, although she remained very obedient, Lucy saw fit to insist with her confessor that the revelation she had received regarding the government's participation be passed on anyway: she asked this of Father Gonçalves in her letter of December 19, 1940.¹⁰⁰² She also mentions this request in the copy of her letter to the Cardinal, and she returns to the point in her letter of January 30, 1941.¹⁰⁰³ Did Father Gonçalves finally inform the Patriarch? We do not know, hence we do not know whether Salazar was informed of it either. At least we know that the other Portuguese bishops took the other warnings of the seer very seriously. She had written to Cardinal Cerejeira on December 19, 1940, and on February 2, 1941, they published a "Collective Pastoral Letter" on "The anguish of the war and the need for expiation."¹⁰⁰⁴

V. THE REVELATION OF THE GREAT SECRET: «IT IS THE HOUR CHOSEN BY GOD» (AUGUST 1941)¹⁰⁰⁵

On June 22, 1941, at four o'clock in the morning, German tanks went to the offensive all along the Germano-Soviet border. Bolshevik Russia suddenly found itself in the Allied camp. On July 12, a Soviet-British accord was signed. At the end of September, a plan for sending supplies to the USSR was elaborated by the USA and Great Britain. Soon the Red Army was becoming the spearhead of the "democracies" against the Nazi hydra.

At the same time, during the summer of 1941, Sister Lucy received the divine inspiration to make known the great Secret of 1917. There, Russia had been designated by name as the most formidable enemy of the Church, of Christendom, and of world peace. Of course, the seer had already written down the Secret in part, during her letter to Pope Pius XII, but this letter had remained secret. This time, in her Third and Fourth Memoirs, she wrote it down again, with the purpose of publicizing it. In an appendix to this chapter we will describe the circumstances and the divine promptings that led Sister Lucy to take up her pen, in August and again in October-December, 1941. However, the historical context of this disclosure of the great Secret invites us to settle beforehand a most difficult and important question.

THE SECRET OF FATIMA, RUSSIA AND GERMANY

On July 13, 1917, Our Lady of Fatima predicted the Second World War. She had predicted the date of the war and the sign that was to precede it. She foretold the atrocious famines of the war and the persecutions. She explained its supernatural meaning as a divine chastisement. She even denounced the fomenters of the war. One thing, however, is astonishing: *She made no allusion to the German aggression*. This point of the message did not fail to surprise and even scandalize those who insisted on seeing Nazism as the worst enemy of the human race and the Beast of the Apocalypse, then as well as now.

Sister Lucy, however, had an opportunity to speak of Germany, but she did so with charity and benevolence. Since 1929, Father Ludwig Fischer had published several remarkable works in Germany to spread the message of Fatima, following a trip to Portugal during which he had been able to question Sister Lucy. In 1940, he questioned the seer on the future of his country. Sister Lucy, as she usually did, sought her light in a more earnest prayer:

«As I was spending hours with Our Lord exposed in the Blessed Sacrament, during some moments when a more intimate union made itself felt and understood in my soul, I prayed for various intentions and especially for Germany. “*It will come back to My fold*, but this moment will be long in coming. It is coming closer, certainly, but slowly, very slowly.” In a letter to Reverend Fischer – out of charity and to encourage him – I mentioned this promise of Our Lord’s.»¹⁰⁰⁶

Sister Lucy wrote to him: «In my humble prayers I never forgot Germany. In the end it will return to the Lord’s fold. This moment is approaching very, very slowly, but it will come one day. *And the Hearts of Jesus and Mary will reign there with splendour.*»¹⁰⁰⁷

No, Germany will not be excluded from the great, final triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. And as we await that triumph, it was not Germany that Our Lady pointed out as the incarnation of the “Mystery of Iniquity” in our twentieth century. Wasn’t Nazism, after all, merely a new phase in secular Germanism? Had the European nations demonstrated, earlier on, a little political wisdom and prudent force, they could have easily stopped its march. But blinded by their Masonic and democratic ideologies, anti-Christian and anti-French, they allowed this new pan-Germanism to be hatched and to prosper... until the day when its hateful, anti-Semitic racism alerted them, and made them suddenly join forces against it. Since that time, Nazi Germany became, for all our democracies

– communist, socialist, liberal and Christian, all of them – the incarnation of Evil, the only enemy to be fought against, the enemy against whom the democracies were to take up the most urgent of crusades, in the name of the rights of Man and Liberty!

Who profited from the affair? Only Bolshevik Russia. Let us dare to say it: in hindsight, Nazism appears to us as the most clever, *the most effective manoeuvre of the Prince of this world* to achieve his ends: the worldwide expansion of atheistic communism and the destruction of every trace of Christian civilization. In effect, the phase of our history opening with the ephemeral attempt at German hegemony in the end served Bolshevism, and in two ways: 1) The only effective opponents of communist penetration, the dictatorships and movements of national preservation were weakened and disdained, even in the eyes of the Church. This was because our democrats and liberals of every stripe agreed with Moscow in labelling them, with ferocious hatred, with the infamous epithets, “Nazi” and “Fascist”. 2) At the same time, the West closed its eyes to the bloody barbarism of Stalin, his death camps and his implacable designs for world revolution. They would recognize and denounce only the danger represented by Hitler, and the horrors of the Nazi camps – which were certainly frightful, but actually not as much as the ones in the Bolshevik Gulag. Communism, which loudly claimed to carry the banner for democracy and the ideals of 1789, was at one blow absolved and excused of all its crimes.

When Russia was once more in the Allied camp, after June 1941, the blindness was total. According to our good apostles of détente, it was the end of the communist danger and the anti-religious persecutions in Russia. In a message of September 3, 1941, President Roosevelt guaranteed as much to Pope Pius XII:

«The churches in Russia are open. I believe there is a real possibility that Russia may, as a result of the present conflict, recognize freedom of religion in Russia, although, of course, without recognition of any official intervention on the part of any Church in education or political matters within Russia... *I believe that this Russian dictatorship is less dangerous to the safety of other nations than is the German form of dictatorship.*»¹⁰⁰⁸

In the name of Pope Pius XII, the farsighted Archbishop Tardini reminded the Allies that the Bolshevik danger was permanent.¹⁰⁰⁹ Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill could be brought to admit it. They even tried – in vain – to convince Pius XII that at the end of the war a “mellowing” USSR would not seek to

Bolshevisse Europe.¹⁰¹⁰

What culpable blindness! But by way of contrast, it allows us to perceive the unexpected profundity, the striking truth of the prophetic Secret of Fatima. Without stopping at the first phase of the conflict dominated by Germany, it focused the whole attention of the Supreme Pontiff and other responsible leaders on the satanic, and even more formidable project of worldwide expansion of the atheistic and anti-religious Bolshevik revolution. This was the sombre future that menaced Europe and the whole world at the end of the atrocious war. Would the Holy Father heed this warning from Heaven? Would he dare to use, finally, the only means that could avert this catastrophe, the deadliest ever for the salvation of souls and Christian civilization, if there was still time?

APPENDIX - THE THIRD AND FOURTH MEMOIRS (JULY - DECEMBER 1941)

THE THIRD MEMOIR (JULY - AUGUST 1941)

CANON GALAMBA'S INITIATIVES. Canon Galamba had published his charming little work, *Jacinta*, on May 13, 1938. This work was the first to publish long excerpts from the two Memoirs Sister Lucy had already written. It enjoyed such success that already in October of the same year a second, revised and augmented edition appeared.

As the year 1942 approached with its upcoming celebration of the Fatima jubilee, the author, who was then a professor at the seminary of Leiria, thought of doing a third edition which would be notably more complete. In November, 1939, the Canon was preoccupied with interrogating Sister Lucy more carefully, and asking her for «information on the life of Jacinta, a separate writing on Francisco, and everything that was said about the Holy Father, Russia and the war.»¹⁰¹¹ But time passed without Bishop da Silva giving the formal orders which alone could get Sister Lucy to write.

During the summer of 1940, Reverend Father Galamba once again wanted to come to Tuy. Here is how Sister Lucy described his visit: «Doctor Galamba came to speak to me some time ago, but as he could not cross the border, he sent me a letter at the house to ask me to go where he was. The Reverend Mother sent

me there, but the place was very unsuitable for speaking about such subjects, and besides, policemen were continually passing by us, perhaps to catch a little bit of what we were saying, and considering the time, this does not surprise me. There was also the Mother who accompanied me. I know that several times she repeated the little she heard. Patience. In view of my difficulty in speaking under such circumstances, the Reverend Father said that he was going to note down everything he desired to ask, and that he would send me the interrogation through the mediation of His Grace the bishop.»¹⁰¹²

BISHOP DA SILVA'S EXPRESS ORDER. But since Bishop da Silva had never been urged to intervene, it was only the following year that Doctor Galamba obtained from him what he desired. On July 26, 1941, the Bishop of Leiria finally wrote to Lucy: «His Excellency the bishop wrote me a letter», she relates to Father Gonçalves, who was then on his way to Zambia, «and told me that the Reverend Galamba will come to question me again. He ordered me to write everything else related with Jacinta because they are going to publish a new edition of the book *Jacinta*.»¹⁰¹³

“IT SEEMED TO ME THAT GOD WAS SPEAKING TO ME THROUGH THIS ORDER AND THAT THE MOMENT HAD COME...”¹⁰¹⁴ «This order», Lucy explains to Father Gonçalves, «fell into my bosom like a ray of light making me know that *the time had arrived to reveal the first two parts of the Secret* and to add two chapters in the new edition of the book about Jacinta: one about hell and a second one about the Immaculate Heart of Mary.»¹⁰¹⁵ She writes elsewhere that she «feels interiorly that it is the hour chosen by God...»¹⁰¹⁶

A COMMENTARY ON THE SECRET. Sister Lucy, who went to work immediately on this task, wrote the final words of this Third Memoir a month later, on August 31, 1941: «I offer to Our Good God and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, this little work, which is the fruit of my poor and humble submission to those who represent Him in my regard. I beg Them to make it fruitful for Their glory and the good of souls.»¹⁰¹⁷

She avows that she had to overcome an extreme reluctance to reveal these most dramatic aspects, which were also the most intimate and the most difficult to express in Our Lady's message... to the point that she was tempted, at times, to cast in the fire all the notes she had already made. «*I am afraid of the questions about hell they are going to ask me*», she explains to Father Gonçalves.

However, she adds, «I have no doubt that both the revelation of hell and the mercy of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will do a great deal of good for souls», as well as the description of the extraordinary spirit of sacrifice which this twofold thought aroused in Jacinta's heart.¹⁰¹⁸

This Third Memoir, which being only twelve pages long is the briefest one, is surely the most important and the most striking one in all Sister Lucy's writings. After having quoted the text of the great Secret, including the first part, the vision of hell which was still omitted in the letter to Pope Pius XII,¹⁰¹⁹ she furnishes the most authoritative commentary possible, and the most moving one: describing how its principal themes – hell, war, and recourse to the Immaculate Heart of Mary – had profoundly marked the sensible, tender, and very serious soul of little Jacinta. In these few pages, which must be reread and meditated on unceasingly, the entire message of Fatima is condensed.

GREAT AND TERRIBLE LESSONS. While recording Jacinta's prophetic visions, Lucy's Memoir tied them in with the urgent significance of the present hour, and unveiled its supernatural meaning. Lucy relates: «One day, I went to Jacinta's house to spend a little while with her. I found her sitting on her bed, deep in thought. "Jacinta, what are you thinking about?" "About the war that is coming. So many people are going to die, and almost all of them are going to hell! Many homes will be destroyed, and *many priests will be killed*. Look, I am going to Heaven, and as for you, when you see the light which the Lady told us would come one night before the war, you run up there too." "Don't you see that nobody can just run off to Heaven!" "That's true, you cannot! But don't be afraid! In Heaven I'll be praying hard for you, for the Holy Father, for Portugal, so that the war will not come here, and *for all priests*."»¹⁰²⁰

Contemplating with fright the horrors of the war, Jacinta could not separate this thought from the thought of hell. It was as if the atrocities of the war, which gave death a more terrible aspect, were to remind us above all of the gravest peril, that of eternity in hell.

«*Many priests will be killed...*» The prophecy was fulfilled to the letter, during the first years of the war. Must it be recalled that in Poland alone, about 3,000 priests out of 12,000 – in other words, about a quarter! – perished during the Second World War, at the time when Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia were still allies?¹⁰²¹

“THE BLOOD SPILLED BY THE MARTYRS.” Although the chastisement of God sometimes strikes the good as well as the wicked, the sufferings of the former and the latter do not have the same value. For those who harden themselves in their revolt against God, it is already, alas, the beginning of eternal torments. But for those who were ready, or who were converted and accepted the trial with humility and patience, their sufferings took on the aspects of a sacrifice; they have an expiatory value and effectively contribute to the salvation of souls.

When, in a letter of January 21, 1940, Sister Lucy mentioned in connection with the war «*the blood spilled by the martyrs*», which in the end would appease the divine wrath, and when Our Lady announced in Her Secret that «*the good will be martyred*», how can we forget about these millions of Ukrainian or Polish Catholics martyred by the Bolsheviks? Granted, they did not all die as “martyrs” in the precise and canonical sense of the term. However, their Catholic Faith was surely not extraneous to the impious decision which consigned them to death.

After invading eastern Poland in 1939, the Red Army collected about 250,000 prisoners of war, who were divided between a hundred camps. Before long, 15,570 officers were separated from the soldiers. Among them were 8,300 active officers. The others were from the reserves: professors, lawyers, doctors, all the elite of Poland. There were also many priests. An emissary was sent to the Kremlin to find out what was to be done with these thousands of officers. He saw Stalin and rapidly explained the situation to him. Stalin took a sheet of paper off his desk, and wrote a single word on it: “Liquidate.”¹⁰²²

The NKVD executed the order: 15,000 Polish officers were massacred in April of 1940. The majority were slaughtered in the forest of Katyn near Smolensk, where the Germans discovered thousands of corpses in February 1943.¹⁰²³ Stalin was already preparing the Sovietization of Poland, which he would organize after the war. For the same purpose, 1,200,000 Poles from Ukraine and western Byelorussia were deported to Siberia and central Asia.

After the victims of the Spanish Civil War, here is an innumerable number of victims too often forgotten. It is fitting to recall their memory in the context of the Fatima message, which reveals the ultimate meaning of their death: «*The good will be martyred.*»

THE FOURTH MEMOIR (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1941)

On October 7, 1941, Bishop da Silva and Father Galamba presented themselves at Valença do Minho (at the Spanish-Portuguese border), for a carefully prepared interrogation. Sister Lucy had come. She handed them the manuscript of the Third Memoir, and was promptly given new orders.

In effect, thanks to Canon Galamba's insistence, the Bishop of Leiria finally agreed to ask her for additional information or clarifications on precise questions, which were clearly formulated for her: 1) She had to write a biography of Francisco, just as she had written one of Jacinta (First Memoir), and her own (Second Memoir). She had to give a new complete account of the apparitions of the Angel and Our Lady. 3) She was to write everything she still remembered about Jacinta. 4) She was to copy the worldly songs they used to sing. 5) She was to read Father da Fonseca's work, *Nossa Senhora de Fatima*, and make a note of anything inexact she found there.¹⁰²⁴

By November 25, Lucy's writing had already filled an entire large notebook, which she immediately sent to Leiria, because time was pressing. The second notebook was finished on December 8. In two months she had furnished a considerable amount of work. She herself describes in what spirit she wrote this new Memoir:

“NOT TO WRITE A SINGLE LETTER THAT IS NOT FOR THEIR GLORY.”
«After a humble prayer at the feet of Our Lord in the tabernacle and before the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Loving Heavenly Mother, asking the grace not to be permitted to write one word, or even a single letter, that is not for Their glory, I come now to begin this work, happy and at peace as are those whose conscience assures them that they are doing in all things the will of God.

«Abandoning myself completely into the arms of Our Heavenly Father and to the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I therefore once again place in Your Excellency's hands the fruits of my one tree, the tree of obedience.»

“IN A REMOTE CORNER OF THE ATTIC.” She writes: «in this remote corner of the attic, lit by a single skylight, to which I withdraw whenever I can, in order to escape, as far as possible, from all human eyes. My lap serves as a table, and an old trunk as a chair. But someone will say, “Why don't you write in your cell?” Our dear Lord has seen fit to deprive me even of a cell, although there are

quite a few empty ones in the house... But I am glad and I thank God for the grace of having been born poor, and for living more poorly still for love of Him.»

“I AM NO MORE THAN A POOR AND MISERABLE INSTRUMENT.” «I need no more than this: obedience and abandonment to God who works within me. I am truly no more than a poor and miserable instrument which He desires to use, and in a little while, like a painter who casts his now useless brush into the fire so that it may be reduced to ashes, the Divine Artist will Himself reduce His now useless instrument to the ashes of the tomb, until the great day of the eternal alleluias.»¹⁰²⁵

“I SHALL SAY EVERYTHING.” «I shall begin, then, my new task, and thus fulfil the commands received from Your Excellency as well as the desires of Reverend Dr. Galamba. *With the exception of that part of the Secret which I am not permitted to reveal at present, I shall say everything.* I will leave nothing out on purpose.»¹⁰²⁶

A MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

«But you, Lucy», Our Lady had declared on June 13, 1917, «are to stay here some time longer. Jesus wishes to use you to make Me known and loved. He wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.»

Thanks to her patience and her redoubled efforts, thanks also to Canon Galamba's insistence, what wonderful progress had been achieved in the revelation and publication of Our Lady's message in three years! The year 1939 had seen the approval of the reparatory devotion. In 1940, Sister Lucy had written her letter to Pope Pius XII. Finally, in 1941, she had just written her two most important Memoirs, where she had made a point of repeating the integral text of the great Secret, both times exactly in the same terms, except that the second time she added, significantly: «In Portugal, the dogma of faith will always be preserved.»

In short, Sister Lucy had fulfilled her mission as witness perfectly. Now it was the hierarchy's turn to act. Would the Secret be disclosed to the Christian people? Would Russia, or at least the world, finally be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary? Everything depended on the Holy Father. In her

convent at Tuy, Sister Lucy prayed for him and waited, full of hope.

CHAPTER XII

TOWARDS THE CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (1939 - 1942)

In 1938, Cardinal Pacelli, then the Secretary of State, had blessed at Rome the mosaic of the crowning of Our Lady, destined for the basilica of Fatima.¹⁰²⁷ This undoubtedly was the future Pius XII's first official contact with the event of Fatima. What then were his inner sentiments regarding the Portuguese apparitions and their message? What did he think of them on March 2, 1939, when he received the office of Supreme Pastor of the Church? In spite of his prudent reserve, many indications suggested that before long he might receive Our Lady of Fatima's requests more favourably than his predecessor.

I. PIUS XII AND FATIMA: A TRIPLE CONVERGENCE

To recognize the supernatural authenticity of the events of the Cova da Iria, it suffices to be well informed. Pope Pius XI had not hesitated to take this first step in 1929-1930. But Fatima is also and above all a vast and perfectly coherent message, with lasting consequences in the mystical, theological and political order.

Fatima is indeed a *mystical doctrine*, or so to speak a devotion completely centred on the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the consecration and reparation due to It. It is also the fully traditional conception of *religion and theology*, completely oriented towards the last ends without any compromise with the world, or the idle dreams of Christian progressivism, dear to the Sillon or to a certain type of Catholic Action. In short, it is the religion of Saint Pius X. Finally, like it or not, it is a *politics of Christendom* which invites the Church to stand up resolutely to the gravest peril of the hour, and all its accomplices across the world and even in the Church: freemasons, liberals or so-called Red Christians. Fatima is Portugal and its exemplary episcopate, solidly united behind Cardinal Cerejeira. With discretion and keeping their independence, but also forcefully and prudently, the bishops did not fear to indicate to all the Catholics of the country the policy to be followed: an absolute loyalism, enthusiastic support for Salazar and his program of national recovery.

Indeed, if a Pope had no special and active devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, and no great esteem for the doctrine of Saint Pius X, and was filled with mistrust for Portuguese Catholic nationalism, considering it insufficiently democratic... such a Pope could hardly be favourable to Fatima.

Fortunately the new Pope, called in 1939 to take the burden of running the Church into his own hands, at the beginning was in almost perfect harmony with all the themes of the Fatima message. In 1950, he even declared to Father Suarez, Master General of the Dominicans: «Tell your religious that *the Pope's thinking is contained in the message of Fatima.*»¹⁰²⁸

A DEVOTED SERVANT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Roger Aubert, a post-conciliar Church historian, scornfully deplores «the overly pronounced taste» Pius XII had «for devotional forms of the Mediterranean type...»¹⁰²⁹ But never mind this disparaging judgment of our liberal theologian. We should admire the Pope instead. Pius XII was a Roman, and his soul was permeated profoundly with the great Catholic devotions: to Christ the King, the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin and the saints; there lay his heart.

«From his earliest youth, Eugenio Pacelli had a childlike love for the Blessed Virgin. In the little chapel of the *Madonna della Strada*, at the *Gesu*, all resplendent with gold and precious stones, his Marian devotion took on concrete form.»¹⁰³⁰ He loved to recall that from his infancy he had been inscribed in the confraternity of the Holy Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.¹⁰³¹ On December 8, 1939, before the Chapter of Saint Mary-Major, he recalled with emotion the memory of his first Mass, which he had insisted on celebrating in this basilica:

«The sweet memory of this happy event often permeates our mind. As an agreeable and sincere witness to this act, we recognize that *our priesthood, received under the auspices of the Mother of God, has progressed thanks to Her...* In the doubts and anguish in which we often found ourselves, we have appealed to Our most sweet Mother, and without the trusting hope we had placed in Her ever being disappointed, from Her we have received light, aid, and consolation. May this most faithful protectress continue to protect Her child through Her goodness and kindness; charged with the burden of the apostolic ministry, he needs Her most powerful help...»¹⁰³²

On May 13, 1917, his episcopal consecration at the Sistine Chapel by Pope Benedict XV was also – without his knowledge, but in most extraordinary fashion – placed under the sign of Our Lady, and Our Lady of Fatima. In 1935, Cardinal Pacelli had himself requested of Pius XI the favour of being named legate to Lourdes, to have the opportunity of going there on pilgrimage, and pronouncing the panegyric of Saint Bernadette.¹⁰³³

Still more remarkable is the fact revealed to us by Cardinal Tardini: the day after his election, Pius XII already indicated *the definition of the dogma of the Assumption* as one of the three principal points of his pontifical program.¹⁰³⁴

In the discourse following his coronation, on March 12, 1939, the Pope pronounced these beautiful words: «... strengthened as well by the protection of Our Lady of Good Counsel, who was the patroness of the conclave, We take into Our hands the government of the barque of Peter to guide it, in the midst of so many billows and tempests, towards the port of peace.»¹⁰³⁵ Indeed, it was in the Most Holy Virgin, whom he invoked as «*Mediatrice of peace*», that he placed all his hopes of seeing the terrible conflict ravaging Europe finally subside.¹⁰³⁶ Before long, he was able to repeat the words of Our Lady of Fatima on July 13, 1917: «*Only She can help you.*»¹⁰³⁷

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT PIUS X

On August 19, 1939, while receiving a group of pilgrims from Venice, Pius XII pronounced a discourse of decisive importance. He vigorously affirmed his admiration, his veneration for Pope Pius X, and his firm desire to grant him, without delay, the honour of the altars. His process for beatification, put on the back burner by Pius XI, in effect was revived and brought to completion. Although for long years he had been under the orders of Cardinal Gasparri, and then Pius XI, Cardinal Merry del Val and Pope Sarto had forever conquered the heart and won the esteem of the young priest and future prelate, Pacelli.¹⁰³⁸

It was not just the Good Shepherd that Pius XII admired in his holy predecessor. He admired, first, «*the defender of Truth*», who had had the foresight and the strength to condemn Modernism:

«Having been born and lived among the people, and witnessing the modern struggles of a scientific and social thinking that was menacing the purity of

Catholic Faith and doctrine, *he did not hesitate to condemn the proud pretensions of a false knowledge* – which used the term “intellectual progress” to describe the errors inspired by the dreams of an illusory philosophy and the metamorphoses of a truth that varied with every passing wind – while he opened the doors of the Biblical Institute to those who aspired to true knowledge and the study of the inspired Word.

«Defender of the truth, attached to the homage of reason to faith, Pius X also appeared on the throne of Peter as a champion of the liberty and rights of the Church... As a giant who could not be shaken, he battled in the contested question of the election of bishops, etc.»

Above all, Pius XII had the singular merit of understanding and imposing the still relevant and even prophetic import of Saint Pius X's work. The Pope declared:

«No, the twenty-five years which have gone by have taken away nothing of the attractive force and resplendent authority from the pure and luminous figure of Saint Pius X.» On the contrary: the more time passes, «the better we can see and understand *what an exceptional importance and extraordinary mission he had, especially in such stormy times...* In the face of the progress of events and fermentation of doctrines... the person and work of Saint Pius X take on aspects and proportions which could not easily have appeared with such clarity in an earlier age.

«Today, at a time when the Church of Christ is called to combat the errors and condemnable tendencies of the world – more arduous and decisive struggles could hardly be conceived – we are able to measure more exactly and weigh more precisely the debt of gratitude which we owe to him. He occupied himself with a force and a constant, vigilant wisdom *in preparing the members of Christ's Mystical Body for future struggles, to sharpen the weapons of the spirit for these battles*, and to educate the sentiments and hearts of the faithful in the spirit of a sincere and ardent militia of Christ.»¹⁰³⁹

Pius XII never failed in the future to present his saint of predilection as «*the Pope of the twentieth century*», «*the Saint which Providence presents for our times.*»¹⁰⁴⁰

«THE COMMON FATHER OF CHRISTENDOM»

THE POPE OF ANTI-COMMUNISM. Archbishop Pacelli had been the nuncio to Munich at the moment of the spartacist uprising of April, 1919. He had seen at close range what the Bolshevik revolution was. On several occasions, he stood up to it. He also learned his lessons from this dramatic experience.¹⁰⁴¹ He was never duped by Moscow's advances, and he never departed from his lucid, resolute anti-communism.

Thus in the spring of 1939, seeing the war coming, Pius XII took the initiative of an international conference to resolve the differences dividing Germany and Poland. The USSR was not even on this list of participants invited. «The British Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, mentioned it to the apostolic delegate, Msgr. Godfrey: "There are many who will regret that Russia is excluded from this list of powers His Holiness has approached." The Pope's representative answered that *in no case could the Pope consider such an invitation*».¹⁰⁴²

THE POPE OF THE SPANISH CRUSADE. When Franco had announced to the Pope that the war in Spain was over, Pius XII responded immediately, on April 1, 1939, by a warm telegram; «Lifting our hearts to God, we thank Your Excellency *for the long-awaited victory of Catholic Spain...*»¹⁰⁴³ On April 16, he addressed *a radio message to the Spanish nation*, where he expressed his «immense joy... for the gift of peace and the victory with which God has deigned to crown the heroism of your faith and your charity, proven by so many and such generous sufferings.» The Pope celebrated the victory of the Catholic Faith over «materialistic atheism», «the tenacious propaganda and the incessant efforts of the enemies of Jesus Christ», who had wished to make Spain «the supreme proving grounds for their destructive powers». «Although the Almighty did not allow them to attain their end, He still tolerated the realization of some of their terrible effects so that the world might see how religious persecution... can lead modern society into unimagined abysses of sinister destruction and passionate discord.»

After having praised the courage of those who resolutely stood up to fight against such plans, in several places Pius XII proclaimed his esteem and full confidence in Generalissimo Franco: «We know of the most noble Christian sentiments which the Head of State and so many of his faithful collaborators have unmistakeably demonstrated...» Then, speaking to the Spanish bishops: «It

is incumbent on you to counsel each and every one, so that in their policy of restoring peace, all follow the principles inculcated by the Church and proclaimed so nobly by the Generalissimo...» Granting his final blessing, Pius XII again cited by name «the Head of State and his illustrious government».¹⁰⁴⁴

On June 11, 1939, receiving 3,000 Spanish legionaries at the Vatican, the Pope addressed them as veritable crusaders. The fatherly love, admiration and warmth in his tone strike us with astonishment. For it had been decades, unfortunately, since any soldier of Christendom had been fortunate enough to hear similar words from the mouths of the Church's Pastors:

«Welcome, leaders, officers and soldiers of Catholic Spain, you, our dearest children who have given your Father immense consolation. We are happy to see in you proven, courageous and loyal defenders of your country's faith and civilization. As we said to you in our radio message, you *“have known how to sacrifice yourselves even unto heroism for the defence of the inalienable rights of God and religion”*».

«As we see you before us, covered with the glory acquired by your Christian valour, our thoughts go out especially to your companions who fell on the field of battle...» The Pope then goes on to explain how Spain without the Cross of Jesus Christ would no longer be Spain. «And God has willed that this magnificent thought spring up from your heart, which is generous with two great loves: *the love of religion*, which guarantees for you eternal happiness of the soul, and *the love of country*, which procures for you honourable well-being in the present life. These two loves kindled the fire of enthusiasm in you, and finally assured the brilliant triumph of the Christian ideal and victory...

«We grant you, you and the people you bear in your thoughts or in your hearts, the Generalissimo and his faithful collaborators, the women nurses who assisted you, your families and all the faithful of Catholic Spain, our apostolic blessing.»¹⁰⁴⁵

Admirable language from the leader and «Father of Christendom»!

PIUS XII AND FRANCE. Following the same orientation, Pius XII adopted a new attitude towards France. On July 10, 1939, he decided to lift the harsh sanctions inflicted upon the Catholics of *Action Française* for thirteen years.¹⁰⁴⁶

In 1937, after having examined the dossier and heard the just requests of Catholic monarchists, Cardinal Pacelli, then the Secretary of State, formed a judgment favourable to the lifting of sanctions. After the death of Pius XI and even before the conclave, he «confided to several of his colleagues his desire to end the *Action Française* incident. One of the motives he gave was the pain he felt at seeing well-known and at times very meritorious Christians treated with a rigour not shown to infidels!»¹⁰⁴⁷

When he became Pope, he did not hesitate to keep his promise and respond to the urgent requests of the Carmel of Lisieux and two eminent prelates: Cardinal de Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec, and Bishop Breynat, the missionary bishop of northern Canada, both of whom were Oblates of Mary Immaculate. By this benevolent measure, the Pope contributed to national reconciliation which was more necessary than ever on the eve of the war.

Not long after came the debacle of Summer, 1940 [Ed. the French defeat at the hands of the Nazis], and Marshal Petain's rise to power. Pius XII, whose situation at Rome was somewhat analogous to Petain's, and who followed an identical policy, was not afraid to show the French Head of State the same esteem and affection he showed for Franco and Salazar.¹⁰⁴⁸ He was grateful to all three for the effective help they had given the Church, while allowing it to enjoy perfect liberty. He also approved their wise international policy.

A PREDILECTION FOR THE LAND OF HOLY MARY. Pius XII's predecessor had been careful not to make the slightest favourable reference to Salazar's Portugal in his official discourses. Pius XII, on the other hand, was not afraid to manifest his paternal affection for him, and with marked insistence! On October 20, 1940, Portugal's new ambassador, Dr. Carneiro Pacheco, came to present his credentials to the Sovereign Pontiff.

Pius XII answered him, evoking Portugal's glorious past and associating it with «the present energy of its effort towards a sound and vigorous future, *under the wise conduct of those who direct its destiny today*. Among the storms and disturbances of this anguished time of war – which so profoundly afflicts our heart as *common Father of Christendom* – your country is a source of comfort and joy for us, for which we give the warmest thanks to the Lord God, Master of hearts and Saviour of souls. We feel united today *to those whose courageous and effective far-sightedness was able to create a state of mind and state of affairs in Portugal which*

constitute an indispensable preliminary to the happy events of the present year, which are as important for the Church as for the State.»

And the Pope continued by praising Salazar: «The Lord has given the Portuguese nation a head of state who was able not only to win the love of his people, and especially the poorest classes, but also the world's esteem and respect. To him goes the merit of having been, on the government's side, and under the auspices of the eminent President of the Republic, the author of a great work of peacemaking between Church and State...»¹⁰⁴⁹

Pius XII had in fact concluded the first concordat of his pontificate with Salazar's Portugal on May 7, 1940. The concordat was completed by a "missionary accord", both very favourable to the Church and the good of souls.¹⁰⁵⁰ One month later, the Pope wished to underline the spiritual importance of this double diplomatic accord by an encyclical, the third of his pontificate, which was equally a red letter date in the history of Fatima...

THE FIRST MARKS OF GOODWILL IN FAVOUR OF FATIMA

Through chance, through a delicate gesture of the Holy Father, or through a secret design of Providence, the encyclical *Saeculo exeunte* was published on June 13, 1940, the anniversary of the second apparition, when the Blessed Virgin had shown the three shepherds Her Immaculate Heart surrounded by thorns.

That same year, 1940, Portugal was celebrating two anniversaries: the eighth centennial of its independence, and the third centennial of its restoration. After a long introduction exalting the past greatness of Portugal as a monarchy, and its colonial and missionary vocation, the Pope mentioned the recent solemn accords concluded between the Land of Holy Mary and the Holy See. Then he returned to the object of the encyclical, urging the Church in Portugal to develop its overseas missions still more: «In your most extensive colonies live many hundreds of thousands of brothers¹⁰⁵¹ who solicit and await from you especially the light of gospel truth.»

Now comes the important part: for the first time in an official text the Pope mentioned the name of Fatima, and in terms which referred to the message of Our Lady:

«Let the faithful not forget, especially when they recite the Rosary, so recommended *by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima*, to ask the Virgin Mother of God to obtain missionary vocations, with abundant fruits for the greatest possible number of souls...»

Again, at the conclusion of the encyclical: «Without any doubt God in His goodness will pour out His abundant blessings on these generous enterprises and on the most noble Portuguese nation. The Blessed Virgin, *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary venerated at Fatima*, the Holy Mother of God who brought victory at Lepanto, will assist you with Her most powerful assistance...»¹⁰⁵²

Given the extreme circumspection of Roman authorities in the matter, this double mention of Fatima in an encyclical certainly marked on the Holy Father's part a will which had resolved to manifest, *urbi et orbi*, his recognition of the apparitions and message of the Cova da Iria.¹⁰⁵³

June 1940 was also the period when the Bishop of Macao and Father da Fonseca explained the requests of Our Lady of Fatima to the Pope. «His Holiness showed himself very favourable», Sister Lucy wrote shortly after.¹⁰⁵⁴

On June 4, 1940, another mark of benevolence came from the Holy See: the Pope granted the new diocese of Nampula in Mozambique Our Lady of Fatima as Patroness.¹⁰⁵⁵

Finally, on December 3, 1941, Canon Barthas, who in his last work, "It Was Three Small Children", paid tribute to Pope Pius XII, received a response from the Secretariat of State passing on the Holy Father's thanks and congratulations. Such an official letter, when inserted into the work, would contribute greatly to its immense success. The following year, Canon Barthas observed as much:

«In the foreword to the first edition, we regretted the French reading public's profound ignorance on Fatima. Scarcely had a few months gone by than this ignorance gave way to a pious and avid curiosity: the press broke its obstinate silence, preachers mentioned these wonderful events from the pulpit, prelates referred to them in the pulpit or in their writings.

«The declarations of the highest religious authorities and the allusions of the Sovereign Pontiff in several of his messages were certainly the principal

*cause of this situation being reversed.»*¹⁰⁵⁶

To be more precise, it was the events of the year 1942 that suddenly revealed to the Church and the entire world the extraordinary importance of the events of Fatima.

II. THE DOUBLE JUBILEE OF 1942: IN PORTUGAL, THE APOTHEOSIS OF OUR LADY

FEBRUARY 11: THE BISHOPS OPEN THE JUBILEE YEAR

For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the apparitions, the bishops once again addressed a collective pastoral letter to all Portuguese people, where they indicated in what spirit this solemn jubilee was to be celebrated. This admirable text described with fervour and enthusiasm the «true miracle» of peace and the religious, political and social renewal achieved by the Blessed Virgin in Portugal since the blessed days of Her apparitions in the Cova da Iria.

But after the giving of thanks came a firm and vigorous exhortation, in perfect conformity with the spirit of Fatima. The exhortation is so salutary, so relevant and so striking that one wonders why the Church ever changed her way of speaking! Here is the complete, detailed account given by Canon Barthas in his 1943 edition, the most complete account relating to events of the jubilee year. The account allows us to relive this wonderful epoch month by month and day by day, an epoch filled with intense and solid Marian devotion. The bishops explained:

«The Virgin's promises are tied to a condition: fidelity to the twofold duty of prayer and penance. In Her conversations with the seer, there is question only of sin, of sinners, hell, reparation, conversion, mercy. Like Lourdes, Fatima is an insistent appeal to penance, an anxious request for souls to turn to God.

«This kind of talk, so foreign to our modern ways, the three little shepherds of Fatima well understood, they who performed such great penances to obtain the conversion of sinners and console the Immaculate Heart of Mary. *We must therefore declare war on sin, this implacable tapeworm which devours the fibres of the social organism and provokes the great*

catastrophes of peoples. The Blessed Virgin very clearly declared to Her confidants that the calamities hanging over the world are the punishment for the sins of men, and She added that if men did not do penance and reparation, even more terrible evils would come.

«This message has not been sufficiently understood.» And the Portuguese prelates go on to explain the principal points setting modern life in opposition to the ideal of Fatima: «violation of the sacred duties of the family, an appetite for luxury and pleasure, the abuse of riches to satisfy vices, pomp-filled displays of vanity, immorality of public spectacles, excessive liberty in the way certain people dress, family egotism which depletes the sources of life in so many households, failures to observe the sanctity of Sunday, etc. Let us not pretend to associate religion with our disorders and caprices. The processions, pilgrimages, and various acts of worship are in vain if they do not detach us from sin and turn us to God. If we want to benefit from the divine mercy, we must not lull ourselves to sleep by constantly seeking our own comfort, but instead embrace duty courageously and practice a generous charity. May each of us be a determined and sincere apostle of the message of Fatima!»¹⁰⁵⁷

After having mentioned the providential coincidence of the Holy Father's episcopal jubilee with the jubilee of Fatima, the bishops explained the practical decisions they had taken.¹⁰⁵⁸

APRIL 8-13: THE MARIAN CONGRESS, OUR LADY OF FATIMA AT LISBON

In April, a Marian Congress for young women was organized at Lisbon. On this occasion, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima was brought in procession from the Capelinha to the Empire's capital. As Canon Barthas recalls, the voyage was a dazzling apotheosis:

«The statue, carried on a car decked with flowers, travelled over the 90 mile route... Stops had been planned in the cities and principal crossroads. Having departed in the early afternoon, the statue arrived at the capital about seven o'clock in the evening. Triumphant welcomed in the streets, it was brought to the church which Lisbon had just built in honour of Our Lady of Fatima, and which was the largest church in the city.» Cardinal Cerejeira received it with a discourse which was carried on radio.

«On Sunday evening, April 11, a torchlight procession closed the Congress. The Cardinal Patriarch presided, surrounded by numerous prelates. Ministers representing the government were present. An estimated five hundred thousand torches, carried by the people of Lisbon, illumined the avenues of the capital. The following day, Our Lady's image returned to the Capelinha of Fatima.»¹⁰⁵⁹

MAY 13: SOLEMNITY OF THE JUBILEE OF FATIMA

In spite of the cold and the pouring rain, all day on the 12th, and right into the morning of the 13th, over 500,000 pilgrims took part in the national pilgrimage. Ten thousand young people from various detachments of Catholic Action, and thousands of priests gathered together under the auspices of the entire episcopate of Portugal, grouped around the patriarch. Father Cruz, the Apostle of Portugal already venerated as a saint, was present. Cardinal Cerejeira spoke of the double jubilee of May 13:

«This fact opens luminous horizons of hope in the blood-stained mist of the present. With great reason, we can be confident that, through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Her... Whom we call the Mother of mercy, God is preparing great things for the world...

«Fatima has still not revealed its entire secret to Portugal and the world, but it does not seem excessive to us to say that what it has already revealed to Portugal is the sign and pledge of what it reserves for the world.

«To express what has happened here for the past twenty-five years, the Portuguese vocabulary has only one word: miracle. Yes, we are firmly convinced that we owe Portugal's wonderful transformation to the Most Holy Virgin.

«And to strengthen us in this conviction, may I permit myself to reveal that this special protection has been promised in some way twenty-five years ago – which we ourselves, your bishops, learned recently – through the prayers and sacrifices of three humble and unlettered children. It was promised by an Angel who gave his name: the Angel of Portugal.»¹⁰⁶⁰

The Cardinal then cited the account of the apparition in the summer of 1916,

where the Angel asked the shepherds for prayers and sacrifices and promised peace in return: «In this way you will obtain peace for your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal.» Thus the new themes were disclosed to the faithful by the supreme authority in the country's hierarchy.

A YEAR OF GRACES AND GREAT DEVOTION

The pilgrimages on the thirteenth of each month brought the usual crowds of pilgrims. «The *Voz da Fatima* mentioned sudden, surprising healings coming after almost every pilgrimage.» On July 13, the “Prayers of the Angel” were published with a concession of fifty days’ indulgence granted by the Bishop of Leiria.

«The August 1942 issue reported the death and burial of Maria Rosa, Lucy’s mother, who had died in the little house of Aljustrel on July 16, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

«In the entire country, during this jubilee year each city and every parish strove to do something special to honour Our Lady of Fatima. In one place a new statue was put up, in another a chapel was built, etc. In various dioceses “Modesty Leagues” were created...»

OCTOBER 13: THE CROWNING OF OUR LADY

«The event of the day was the blessing of the massive golden crown offered by Portuguese women to Our Lady of Fatima... Chains, earrings, jewellery of every sort had come from everywhere to furnish the material for this work of art.»¹⁰⁶¹

«The crown was blessed at the Capelinha by the Cardinal Patriarch, who was surrounded by numerous prelates and priests including the venerable Father Cruz, whose eighty-third birthday had just been celebrated by Portuguese Catholics.

«After the Mass, the Cardinal pronounced a formula of consecration of Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

«The same day, the families which had not been able to come to Lisbon were invited to make their consecration to the Holy Family, in

remembrance of the apparition of the Child Jesus and Saint Joseph, with which the little seers were favoured on October 13, 1917.

«In many cities, pious ceremonies took place: the most beautiful one took place at Lisbon, in the new parish church dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. In the evening there was a magnificent torchlight procession in the streets of the neighbourhood.»¹⁰⁶²

THE GREAT SECRET IS DISCLOSED

The most important event of this October 13, however, was the publication in all of Portugal of the third edition of *Jacinta*. It was in view of this work that Canon Galamba had obtained the writing of Sister Lucy's Third and Fourth Memoirs. He quoted from the essential passages of the Memoirs and above all gave the public *the exact and complete text of the Secret of July 13*, as the seer had written it in 1941.

We can hardly exaggerate the importance of this publication. For the first time the Portuguese public was presented with all the most specific and important themes of Fatima in their harmonious unity: the vision of hell, Russia, the wars and persecutions, the Immaculate Heart of Mary. What is more, Canon Galamba's work appeared with a remarkable preface by Cardinal Cerejeira and a prologue by Bishop da Silva, which for practical purposes gave it the authority of an official publication of the Portuguese bishops. The Cardinal even ended his allocution at the High Mass at the Cova da Iria by reading some excerpts from his preface to *Jacinta*. Here is the beautiful conclusion:

«The miracle told in this book is the inner miracle of grace, wrought in the souls of the fortunate children to whom it was given to see the Mother of Fair Love... If it were not too bold, I would say that it was Our Lady Herself who wrote it – in the souls of the seers. Has not Saint Paul said that the Christians “were a letter of Christ written not with ink but with the spirit of the Living God”? With Him we can also say that *Jacinta* is a letter of the Blessed Virgin to be read by souls. It tells us better than words what Our Lady came to do at Fatima and what She wants of us.

«The mystery is now becoming clear. Fatima now speaks not only to Portugal, *but to the whole world. We believe that the apparitions of Fatima*

*are the beginning of a new epoch, that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. What has happened in Portugal proclaims the miracle. It is the presage of what the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God has prepared for the world.»*¹⁰⁶³

THE BISHOPS OF PORTUGAL APPROACH ROME ONCE MORE

The Patriarch of Lisbon was one of the first to perceive this worldwide significance of the Message of Fatima, and promote it as such. Also in this jubilee year, the Portuguese bishops decided to approach the Holy See once more in view of obtaining the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In a letter to Father Gonçalves, Sister Lucy wrote on September 6, 1942:

«As far as the consecration of the world is concerned, His Grace the Bishop of Gurza has written to me several times. His Excellency has great desires and great hopes. During their last retreat, Their Excellencies the bishops agreed to *send a new petition to Rome*, and to have this petition done by the bishops of other countries as well. (Meanwhile), time passes and the poor world is in the process of paying divine justice for the debt of its crimes.»¹⁰⁶⁴

Expectations were high in Portugal. For some people October 13 was even a bitter disappointment. Was the Holy Father going to let the jubilee year go by without doing anything? Suddenly, news from Rome dispelled these fears and brought back hope. The Pope let it be known that for the closing of the Fatima jubilee, on October 31, he would speak to the Portuguese nation in a radio message. Before listening to this message, arguably one of the most important Pius XII ever pronounced, we must report events in Rome that concerned Fatima from the beginning of this year of grace, 1942.

III. THE JUBILEE YEAR AT ROME: FROM EXPECTATION TO INVOLVEMENT

CARDINAL SCHUSTER'S INTERVENTION

Already during a diocesan synod in 1941, the Archbishop of Milan had exhorted

his priests to divulge the requests of the Most Holy Virgin of Fatima. But in the beginning of 1942 he was in a position to intervene more efficaciously. In the meantime, Sister Lucy had written her Third and Fourth Memoirs. These two documents were sent by the Bishop of Leiria, as soon as they were typed, to Father da Fonseca, for his new edition of *Le Meraviglie di Fatima*. An Italian priest, Don Luigi Moresco, who was publishing a new work, *Madonna di Fatima*, also received the Memoirs. Through Father Moresco, Cardinal Schuster discovered the “new themes” of Fatima. He even agreed to sponsor their publication, thus covering it with the immense authority he enjoyed with the Italian bishops, both because of his very vast erudition as well as his great reputation for sanctity. Besides, everybody knew that he was the intimate friend of Pius XII, and easily understood that in such a delicate matter he could not act without the Holy Father’s previous consent.

On April 18, 1942, the Cardinal published a pastoral letter entitled, “The Episcopal Jubilee of His Holiness Pius XII in the 25th anniversary of the Marian Apparitions of Fatima.”¹⁰⁶⁵ The Cardinal was the first to publish Our Lady’s prophecies concerning Russia. It had not been done in Portugal yet. Unfortunately, he did not quote the exact text of the Secret but contented himself with a paraphrase:

«The Immaculate Virgin deplored, at the very moment (in 1917), the atheistic propaganda in Russia, announcing in advance the victims whom the Reds were about to martyr in Catholic Spain.» And, after having spoken about the devotion of the five first Saturdays and the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, he described their spiritual fruits in this way: «The cessation of the war, the conversion of Russia to Catholic unity; a new era for a great apostolate to begin in the Church... just as the power of the Crescent was once before, today after our peaceful crusade the Bolshevik power of the Hammer and Sickle will be annihilated by the Providence of the Lord.»¹⁰⁶⁶

«Everything gave the impression», wrote Father Alonso, «that for the writing of this pastoral letter Cardinal Schuster had somehow consulted the Bishop of Leiria and Pius XII.»¹⁰⁶⁷

THE VATICAN APPROVES THE PUBLICATION OF THE NEW FATIMA THEMES

During the spring of 1942, Pius XII intervened in favour of Fatima in one other way. It was a very delicate matter, twenty-five years after the apparitions, to inform the public of such a great number of new themes, concerning which previous authors had kept the most total silence... If ecclesiastical authority did not guarantee in some way the authenticity of these unexpected additions to the initial message, what credibility would they have?

Father da Fonseca and Don Luigi Moresco were aware of the difficulty. Here the intervention of Pius XII was decisive. By authorizing these two works to be printed on *the Vatican Polyglot Press*, the Sovereign Pontiff conferred a singular authority on them and indirectly guaranteed the authenticity of the facts reported. Thus the fourth edition of *Meravigle di Fatima* by Father da Fonseca and *Madonna di Fatima* by Don Moresco appeared at Rome in April and May of 1942. Both works enjoyed the imprimatur of Msgr. de Romanis, Vicar General of Vatican City.¹⁰⁶⁸

We will explain later on the regrettable way our two authors believed themselves obliged to water down the text of Our Lady's Secret. But first we must stress the importance of the event constituted by the appearance of their two works, which were soon followed by a new edition of *Fatima, Merveille Inouie*, by Canon Barthas, who was adapting Father Fonseca's work to French. These new books, which in a few months were distributed in the tens of thousands of copies, were to spread Our Lady's message and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary throughout the world. None of this could have taken place without the authorization of Pius XII, who was not content with allowing all these holy enterprises, but encouraged and blessed them as well.

THE JUBILEE OF MAY 13 AT ROME

The Holy Father did not want to let the anniversary of the first apparition pass without giving new marks of his favourable attitude towards Fatima. The same day, Cardinal Maglione, the Secretary of State, sent a warm telegram in the Pope's name which was read at the Cova da Iria. There was one more prominent favour: the Holy See had granted the faithful who had visited the sanctuary of Fatima during the jubilee, that is from May 13 to October 31, 1942, the favour of a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions.¹⁰⁶⁹

At Rome, however – out of discretion, humility or prudent reserve? – on this

13th of May when his episcopal jubilee was being solemnly celebrated, the Pope himself made no reference to the wonderful coincidence which had marked his rise to the episcopate. There was no reference to it the same day, during his long radio message to the whole world, or on the following day, May 14, in his homily during the commemorative Mass at Saint Peter's.¹⁰⁷⁰

The biographers of Alexandrina da Costa¹⁰⁷¹ point out a remarkable fact: on May 22, in the course of an ecstasy, she shouted: «Glory, glory, glory to Jesus! Honour and glory to Mary! The Holy Father has decided in his heart to consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary!»¹⁰⁷² However, if the Pope made the decision at that moment, he did not manifest it to anybody. We find no mention either of the Immaculate Heart of Mary or Fatima in any of his discourses between May 13 and October 22, in 1942. However, if one is familiar with the meticulous care of which Pius XII examined and corrected with his own hand all documents issued from the Secretariat of State, a letter of congratulations sent by Cardinal Maglione to Canon Barthas on July 12, 1942 to thank him and congratulate him for his recent work, *Fatima, Merveille Inouie*, takes on quasi-official value in our eyes. In this letter we can be sure to find the exact thinking of Pius XII himself, in this summer of the jubilee year:

«The filial homage which the Rev. Father G. da Fonseca and you yourself have had in your heart to offer His Holiness for his episcopal jubilee, laying at his feet your work, *Fatima, Merveille Inouie*, did not fail to profoundly touch the August Pontiff. *He has placed very much hope in the merciful intercession of the Most Holy Virgin for the appeasement of the conflict which is staining the world with blood.* He has requested so strongly in this regard that children have recourse to their all-good and all-powerful Heavenly Mother, and *he is too moved by the coincidence of the wonderful events of Fatima with his own consecration, in 1917*, not to accept with particular gratitude this twofold testimony of devotion both to Mary and the Supreme Pontiff.

«The Holy Father is pleased to congratulate you, Reverend Canon, for the French version you have made – with as much talent as with piety – of the meritorious work of Father da Fonseca... In this gentle confidence His Holiness renews for you, Rev. Canon, as well as Father da Fonseca, the apostolic blessing.»¹⁰⁷³

In the following months, the Portuguese bishops sent their request to the Pope,

and all of a sudden Pius XII made known his decision. On October 31, he spoke to the Portuguese people in an important radio message.

IV. THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (OCTOBER 31, 1942)

In Portugal, the closing of the jubilee had been announced by the press and the radio like a national event. On the evening of October 30, Cardinal Cerejeira pronounced a magisterial radio discourse on “Fatima and the Church”. Next morning, surrounded by the entire Portuguese episcopate, he celebrated pontifical Mass at the Cathedral of Lisbon in the presence of the Head of State and members of the government. Again there was a homily on “the miracle of Fatima”.

«At four thirty in the afternoon, a magnificent religious procession conducts the prelates from the church of Mary Magdalen to the Cathedral, for which tickets were needed to enter. At five o'clock, loudspeakers carried the sound of the bells of St. Peter's, then the voice of the Pope *speaking in Portuguese*. The allocution, the perfect transmission of which was a real technical success for the national station, lasted twenty-three minutes; the people listened with religious silence. Everybody knelt to receive the Holy Father's blessing...

«In every city, from the largest to the smallest, ceremonies similar to the one in the capital took place. At times they took on the appearance of a great apotheosis. It was really all Portugal communicating with enthusiasm and fervour in its gratitude to Mary. In many places, loudspeakers had been placed not only in the churches but in the public squares, in theatres and other public rooms, so that millions of Portuguese heard the voice of the common Father of the Faithful.»¹⁰⁷⁴

At Rome, Pius XII had brought together in the Throne Room the 600 or so Portuguese residing in the Eternal City, perhaps to better stress the fact that the act he had just accomplished was a response to the requests of Fatima.

Here is the integral text of this discourse, in the course of which the Sovereign Pontiff pronounced the formula of consecration of the Church and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.¹⁰⁷⁵

«RADIO MESSAGE TO THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE ON THE OCCASION
OF THE SOLEMNITIES CELEBRATED IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF
FATIMA»

A DOUBLE JUBILEE¹⁰⁷⁶

«Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children:

«*Benedicite Deo coeli et coram omnibus viventibus confitemini ei quia fecit vobiscum misericordiam suam.* Bless the God of Heaven and glorify Him before all the living because He has shown you His mercies (Tob. 12:6).

«Once again, in this year of grace, you climbed the holy mountain of Fatima, taking with you the heart of all Christian Portugal. There in that oasis fragrant with faith and piety, you laid at the feet of your Virgin Protectress the tribute of your love, your homage and your gratitude for the immense benefits which you have lately received; you also made your humble supplication that She would continue Her protection of your country at home and overseas and defend it from the great tribulation by which the world is tormented.

«We, who as common Father of the Faithful, make Our Own the sorrows as well as the joys of Our children, unite Ourselves with all the affection of Our heart with you to praise and exalt the Lord, giver of all good; to thank Him for the graces of Her by whose hands you receive the divine munificence and this torrent of grace.

«We do this with the greater pleasure, because you with filial affection have desired to associate the Jubilee of Our Lady of Fatima and Our Own Episcopal consecration in the same Eucharistic solemnities. The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Vicar of Christ on earth are two devotions profoundly dear to the Portuguese. They have had a place in the heart of Portugal Fidelissimo from the dawn of her nationhood; from the time when the first reconquered lands, nucleus of the future Nation, were consecrated to the Mother of God as the *Terra de Santa Maria* and the newly-constituted kingdom was placed under the protection of St. Peter.»

I. GRATITUDE TO OUR LADY OF FATIMA WHO SAVED PORTUGAL

«“The first and greatest duty of man is gratitude.”¹⁰⁷⁷ “There is nothing so pleasing to God as a soul grateful for the graces and benefits received”.¹⁰⁷⁸ And in this you have a great debt towards the Virgin Mother and Patroness of your country.»

THE NATIONAL DELIVERANCE OF 1926

«In a tragic hour of darkness and distress, when the ship of the State of Portugal, having lost the guide of her most glorious traditions and driven off her course by anti-Christian and anti-national currents, seeming to be running for certain shipwreck, unconscious of present or future dangers whose gravity no one could humanly foretell; in that hour, Heaven, which foresaw these dangers, intervened, and in the darkness light shone; out of chaos order reigned; the tempest abated and Portugal the Faithful can pick up her glorious part as a crusading and missionary nation, as in the days of old when “Christian intrepidity” abounded “in the little house of Portugal,” spreading “the law of eternal life.”¹⁰⁷⁹

«All honour to those who have been the instruments of Providence in this glorious enterprise!

«But glory and thanksgiving first and foremost to the Blessed Virgin, Queen and Mother of this land, which She always aided in its hour of tragedy, and in this most tragic of all made Her protection so manifest, that in 1933, Our Predecessor, Pius XI (of immortal memory), attested in an apostolic letter *Ex officiosis Litteris* to the extraordinary benefits which the Mother of God had recently accorded to Portugal.»

THE GIFT OF A WONDERFUL PEACE

«And, at that time, one could not yet have thought of the vow of 1936 against the Communist peril which was so close to you and so menacing and which came up in a manner so unexpected. And at that time one could not yet appreciate the fact of the marvellous peace which Portugal, despite everything and everyone, continues to enjoy, and which, despite the sacrifices which this peace exacts, is certainly infinitely less ruinous than the war of extermination which is now desolating the world.»

THE PORTUGUESE MIRACLE

«Today, further benefits can be added to those mentioned. The miraculous atmosphere in which Portugal is enveloped has been transformed into innumerable prodigies, many physical, and those yet more marvellous miracles of grace and conversion which flower in this springtime of Catholic life, and which promise to bear abundant fruit.

«Today with even greater reason we must confess that the Mother of God has accorded you the most real and extraordinary blessings. The sacred duty of thanksgiving is all the more incumbent upon you.»

THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE FATIMA JUBILEE

«That you have done this during the present year we are well aware. The official homage must have been agreeable to Heaven and also the sacrifices of children, the prayer and penance of the lowly and humble. All these acts are recorded in God's book.

«The welcome given to Our Lady during Her pilgrimage to the Capital of the Empire during the memorable days of last April 8 and 12 was perhaps the greatest demonstration of the Faith in the eight centuries of your history as a nation.

«Also, the National Pilgrimage of the 13th of May, heroic day of sacrifice, when in cold and rain hundreds of thousands of pilgrims came to Fatima, covering enormous distance on foot to pray and give thanks and make reparation. The valiant example of Catholic Youth shining in their renewed beauty was evident.

«There were the Eucharistic Crusades of children, so dear to Jesus with the filial trust of innocence. They could tell the Mother of God that they had done what She desired – prayers, sacrifices, Communion in thousands – and therefore prayed: “Our Lady of Fatima, it now rests with you. Say but one word to Your Divine Son and the world will be saved and Portugal delivered from the scourge of war.”

«The precious crown of gold and jewels, and more important, of pure love and sacrifice which you offered to your august Protectress on the 13th of this month as a symbol and sign of your eternal gratitude; this and other most beautiful

demonstrations of piety which, with the zealous help of the Episcopate, have been so fertile in all parishes and dioceses in this Jubilee Year, show the gratitude of the faithful Portuguese people and satisfy the debt which they owe to their Heavenly Queen and Mother.»

FOR THE FUTURE, TRUST IN OUR LADY OF FATIMA

«Gratitude for the past is a pledge of confidence for the future. God demands our gratitude for His benefits not because He needs our thanks but because these provoke Him to further generosity.¹⁰⁸⁰

«For this reason it is right to trust that the Mother of God, in accepting your thanksgiving, will not leave Her works incomplete and will faithfully continue to be your Protectress as in days past and preserve you from greater calamities.

«But in order not to presume upon Her goodness, it is necessary that each one, conscious of his responsibilities, should make every effort to be worthy of the singular favour of the Virgin Mother and as grateful and loving children, deserve Her maternal protection more and more.»

EXHORTATION TO PRACTICE THE FATIMA MESSAGE

«We must obey Her maternal counsel as given at the Cana wedding and do all that Jesus desires us to do. And She has told everyone to do penance – *paenitentiam agite* (Mt. 4:17) –, to amend their lives, and turn away from sin, which is the principal cause of the great chastisements which Eternal Justice sends upon the world. In the midst of this materialized and pagan world, in which the way of all flesh is corrupted (Gen. 6:12), you must be the salt of the earth and the light, preserving and illuminating! Carefully cultivate purity and reflect the holy austerity of the Gospels in your lives; and, at all costs, as the gathering of Catholic Youth affirmed in Fatima, openly live as sincere and convinced Catholics, one hundred percent! More yet; filled with Christ, you must diffuse around you the sweet fragrance of Christ and by assiduous prayer, particularly the daily Rosary, and by the sacrifices with which God inspires you, obtain for sinners the life of grace and eternal salvation!

«You will then most confidently invoke the Lord and He will hear you; you will

call on the Mother of God and She will answer: “Here I am.” (Is. 58:9) Then the watchman of the city will not keep watch in vain, because the Lord will keep guard and defence, while the house, which is built upon a secure foundation, will be fortified by the Lord, for the Lord Himself says so. (Ps. 126:1-2) Happy is the people whose King is God, and whose Queen is the Mother of God! She will intercede in its favour, and God will bless His people, granting it peace, the sum of all goods. “The Lord will bless His people in peace.” (Ps. 28:11)»

II. THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, OUR FINAL RECOURSE IN THE CHASTISEMENT OF WAR

«LET US ADORE, WHILE TREMBLING, THE JUSTICE OF GOD!»

«But you cannot be indifferent (indeed who could be?) to the vast tragedy which torments the world. Rather, the more you are privileged by mercies for which you give thanks today, the more securely will you place your confidence in the future under Her protection. The closer you will feel to Her as She protects you with Her mantle of light, and by way of contrast, the more tragic will seem to you the fate of so many nations torn by the greatest calamity of history.

«Terrible manifestation of Divine Justice! Let us adore it while trembling! Yet we must not doubt the Divine mercy because Our Father in Heaven does not forget us, even in the days of His wrath: Cum iratus fueris, misericordiae recordaberis. (Habakkuk 3:2)

«SHE ALONE CAN HELP US»

«Today, the fourth year of the war has already started. It is more threatening than ever with the spread of the conflict. Now more than ever can our trust rest only in God; and, as mediatrix by the throne of God, in Her name Whom one of our predecessors in the First World War ordered to be invoked as Queen of Peace.

Let us invoke Her again, for only She can help us! She, whose maternal Heart was moved by the ruin of your country and so wonderfully came to its aid. She, saddened by Her foreknowledge of this terrible tragedy by which God’s justice punishes the world, had already indicated prayer and penance as the road to salvation. She will not now deny us Her maternal tenderness nor Her most efficacious protection.»

III. THE FORMULA OF CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

SUPPLICATION TO THE MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

«Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Help of Christians, and Refuge of the human race, conqueror in all the great battles of God, we humbly prostrate ourselves, certain of obtaining mercy and finding grace and opportune help in the present calamity. We do not presume on our merits but only on the immense bounty of Your maternal Heart.»

THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF CONSECRATES THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

«To You, to Your Immaculate Heart, We as common father of the great Christian family, as Vicar of Him to Whom was given all power in Heaven and earth, and from Whom we receive the charge of so many souls redeemed by His Precious Blood and which people the whole earth; to You, to Your Immaculate Heart in this tragic hour of human history, we confide, we consecrate, we deliver, not only Holy Church, the Mystical Body of Your Jesus which bleeds and suffers in so many parts and is in so much tribulation, but also the whole world, torn by mortal discord, burning in the fires of hate, victim of its own iniquity.»

SUPPLICATION TO OBTAIN THE GRACES OF CONVERSION AND PEACE

«May You be moved by so much ruin, material and moral, so much sorrow, so much agony of fathers, mothers, wives, brothers and sisters, of innocent children, cut off in the flower of their lives, so many bodies destroyed in the horrible carnage, so many souls tortured and agonized, so many in danger of eternal loss.

«Mother of Mercy, obtain from God both peace, and above all those graces which can convert evil hearts in a moment of time and which prepare, conciliate, and assure true peace! Queen of Peace, pray for us and give peace to the world at war, that peace for which the peoples sigh, peace in the truth, the justice, the charity of Christ! Give peace from armed warfare and peace in souls, so that the

Kingdom of God may develop in tranquillity and order.»

PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF INFIDELS

«Extend Your protection to unbelievers and those who still lie in the shadow of death! Give them peace and let the sunlight shine upon them! May they repeat with us before the one Saviour of the World: Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill!»

PRAYER FOR RUSSIA AND FOR ITS RETURN TO THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

«To peoples separated by error and discord, namely, those who profess to You singular devotion where there was no house that did not display Your holy icon, today hidden perhaps until better days, give them peace, and lead them again to the only flock of Christ under the true and only Shepherd!»

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

«Obtain peace and complete liberty for the Holy Church of God! Stem the flooding waves of paganism and materialism, and kindle in the Faithful love of purity, the practice of a Christian life, and apostolic zeal, that the people who serve God may increase in merit and in numbers.»

THE CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD TO THE SACRED HEART (IN 1899) IS RECALLED

«Finally, as the Church and the whole human race were consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so that by placing in Him all its hopes they might have a “pledge of victory and salvation”,¹⁰⁸¹ thus from today may they be perpetually consecrated to Your Immaculate Heart, O Mother and Queen of the World, that Your love and protection may hasten the triumph of the Kingdom of God and that all generations of mankind, at peace with themselves and with God, may proclaim You Blessed and with You may intone, from pole to pole, the eternal Magnificat of glory, love and thanksgiving to the Heart of Jesus where alone may be found Truth, Life and Peace.»

IV. THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING FOR THE CLERGY, GOVERNMENT, AND PEOPLE OF PORTUGAL

«In the hope that these our supplications and prayers may be favourably heard by the Divine Bounty; to you, beloved Cardinal Patriarch, venerable Brethren and clergy, so that grace from on high may ever render your zeal more fertile; to the President of the Republic; to the illustrious Head of the Government and his Ministers and authorities, so that in this singularly grave and difficult hour Heaven may continue to assist them in their activities in favour of peace and the common good; to all our beloved children in Portuguese territory at home and overseas, that the Blessed Virgin may confirm what She has deigned to operate in you; to all and each of the Portuguese as a pledge of celestial grace, we bestow with all our paternal love and affection Our Apostolic Benediction.»¹⁰⁸²

There we have it. The long wait of so many holy souls who burned with the desire to see devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary spread in the world had been rewarded. The repeated requests of the Portuguese bishops had finally been heard. As though he had suddenly been moved «by an inspiration from on high»¹⁰⁸³, the Sovereign Pontiff had just solemnly consecrated the Church and the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, happily completing the consecration already made, at the beginning of the twentieth century, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.¹⁰⁸⁴ Just as Leo XIII had responded to the request of Mother Mary of the Divine Heart, Pius XII had deigned to hear the supplication which the Fatima seer had sent him two years earlier, on December 2, 1940. He had consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, making a discreet but sufficiently comprehensible reference to this “poor Russia”, abandoned to the pitiless yoke of its oppressors and Bolshevik persecutors.

WHAT PIUS XII DID IN 1942

However, it is important to be clear, so as to avoid all confusion. It was precisely Our Lord’s request of October 22, 1940, that the Holy Father had just satisfied.¹⁰⁸⁵ Once Heaven’s will was obeyed, the corresponding promise was fulfilled right away. Our Lord had promised «to shorten the days of tribulation by which He had decided to punish the world for its crimes». As we will show,

the six months which followed this blessed day, October 31, 1942, marked a veritable turning point of the war. Indeed, after this date, the war slowly moved on to its end. We must also say something about the incomparable supernatural fruits of this first consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

WHAT REMAINED TO BE DONE

It is an unquestionable fact, however, that the greatest and most specific request of the Fatima message – Our Lady's request of July 13, 1917 at Fatima and again at Tuy on June 13, 1929 – had still not been fulfilled. Russia still had not been consecrated specially and by name to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Holy Father and all the Catholic bishops united with him in a solemn act. This act, the only decisive one, to which was connected the wonderful promise of Russia's conversion, had still not been accomplished. As we will see, Sister Lucy took pains to explain this to her superiors in 1943.

The most important act still had to be done. Yet, as Father Alonso stressed, «by propagating devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the consecration of the world already certainly prepared the consecration of Russia».¹⁰⁸⁶ Besides, everything was to be hoped for from the tender and filial Marian devotion of Pope Pius XII. Hadn't the Blessed Virgin Herself predestined him to become «the Pope of Fatima», and totally so? By the moving coincidence of May 13, 1917, had She not manifested Her gentle and kind predilection? Clearly, Our Lady was inviting him in this way to become the zealous servant of Her great designs of mercy over the world.

CONCLUSION

«FROM THE FIRST HOUR THE MIRACLE AUGMENTS, THE MYSTERY DEVELOPS...»¹⁰⁸⁷

At the end of this second volume, we have arrived at this first summit: the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Filled with admiration, we shall discover the slow but continuous growth of the mystery of Fatima, and we can already sense that it will enter into a new phase of magnificent expansion...

*

At the beginning of our inquiry, Fatima appeared to us like the mustard seed in the parable, the smallest of all seeds. We had to observe it most carefully to distinguish, at the beginning, its exceptional nature. Remember... First of all came the age-old devotion of Portugal, this “ Land of Holy Mary”, so faithfully devoted to its Heavenly Padroeira. Then came this obscure little hamlet of the Serra de Aire, the gentle and strong atmosphere of the Christendom of old, still existing at the beginning of this century with its austere morals and intense Christian life. Then, in this chosen milieu, came the souls of three astonishingly simple and generous children, clearly predestined to become, before long, docile instruments of a great “design of mercy”. Then came the apparitions of the Angel and the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, events marked by such limpidity and sobriety, and guaranteed by such striking miracles that their authenticity imposed itself on historians as well as on the Church, which solemnly recognized their supernatural authenticity. The extraordinary “dance of the sun” which closed this wonderful cycle, although limited to a tiny section of Portugal, nevertheless hinted at the extraordinary scope of this heavenly intervention.

**

This second stage of our study has taken us over twenty-five years of history (from 1917 to 1942), and has shown us the steady, harmonious growth of this divine plant sown by the Blessed Virgin Herself in the soil of Fatima. It has grown in spite of all the obstacles vainly raised up by its adversaries to retard its

development and, it must be admitted, in spite of a perhaps excessive reserve and slowness on the part of those who ought to have shown a more prompt and effective zeal. We have seen the Fatima event grow, exceeding the narrow confines of the Cova da Iria, then the diocese of Leiria, and finally crossing the frontiers of Portugal to take on worldwide dimensions. We have seen its message, completed by the revelations of Pontevedra and Tuy announced in 1917, assume an ever greater scope. And when, after 1940, the great Secret was finally disclosed, we have seen Fatima suddenly revealing to the Church and the world its providential and surprising relationships with the most prominent events of this century's political history, and the life of the Church.

Having reached the end of this second volume, we are compelled to state that the obscure village of Fatima had already risen to the rank of the capital of Mary's Empire, standing face to face with Moscow, capital of satan. And let us dare to add as well: Fatima has also risen up for an impressive showdown with Rome, staring each of the Pontiffs succeeding to the Throne of Peter right in the face. We have described the obstinate silence of Pius XI, faced with the repeated requests presented to him to fulfil the decrees of Heaven. On the other hand, we have also mentioned the promising opening of the pontificate of Pius XII, who clearly wished to correspond to the Queen of Heaven's desires manifested at Fatima. Reading his discourse of October 31, 1942, one can guess that the Church and the world were already on their way to the denouement of this poignant tragedy. The protagonists are the humble Virgin of Fatima, powerful Queen of the World; the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, on whom everything depends; and the seven-headed hydra of the Soviet Empire, which God has willed to be, since 1917, the instrument of the world's chastisement.

Fatima has indeed become an immense tree, whose roots are firmly settled deep in our history, and whose branches extend to the very limits of the universe. White doves have come to take shelter in its shade. But all sorts of demons are at work to uproot it...

Our third volume will be devoted to the final secret. As we will see, all the positive and negative energies of the world seem to swirl around this secret. For a quarter of a century, whether this Secret is disclosed to the Faithful or not has depended on the sovereign authority of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Similarly, in

the end it depends on him alone that all the little devotions requested by Our Heavenly Mother be approved, and solemnly recommended by the Church: the daily Rosary, the wearing of the Holy Scapular of Mount Carmel, and the practice of reparation on the five first Saturdays, in honour of Her Immaculate Heart. On him depends, finally, this consecration of Russia, which God has willed to set as the condition for its miraculous conversion, a conversion which alone can restore peace to the world and full liberty to the Church. As we await this consecration, we note how this delay invites us all to prayer and sacrifice, to hasten the happy moment when all these requests shall be fulfilled!

We hope that our third volume, which is to appear in the near future, will contribute to sustaining the hope of thousands of Catholics, exhausted by too long a wait and confused in an increasingly dark night around them. For then as now, according to the designs of Providence in our century, there is no other hope for our folly-ridden world except the one gently beaming from the sanctuary of Fatima. Such is the firm assurance of Heaven's humble messenger, Sister Mary Lucy of the Immaculate Heart. May it be granted to us to await, like her, with patience and with fervour, the full revelation of the mercies of the Lord over the world through the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the wonderful prelude to the Universal Reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

*Maison Saint-Joseph
January 6, 1984
Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord*

APPENDICES IN THE SECOND EDITION (October 1986)

APPENDIX I - FRANCISCO'S DEATH¹⁰⁸⁸

Under the title “Francisco’s Death”, Father Kondor, writing in the April 1986 issue of “Bulletin for the Causes of Beatification for Francisco and Jacinta”, published what we believe is a definitive correction.

«Francisco’s death», he wrote, «actually took place on April 4, 1919, around ten o’clock in the evening. The most reliable document is undoubtedly the parochial inquiry of Father Ferreira, parish priest of Fatima from 1914 to 1919... This report was concluded on April 18, 1919. The last witnesses were heard on March 2, 1919. Francisco’s death took place in between these two dates. As he sent his bishop this important report, written at the bishop’s own order, the parish priest ended with these lines: **“Meanwhile Francisco the seer died at ten o’clock in the evening on April 4 of this year, victim of a pulmonary ailment which lasted five months. He received the sacraments with lucidity and piety. He also confirmed that he had seen a Lady at the Cova da Iria and at Valinhos.”**»

At the moment of Francisco’s death, his godmother Therese was present. «Jacinta, who was already so ill, was also near her brother’s sickbed when he died. Seeing everybody weeping around her brother’s body, she said: **“Why are you weeping, since he is happy?”** Thus, Francisco’s first and last sacramental Communion at the hands of a priest took place on April 3, the first Thursday of the month; his death took place on the 4th, the first Friday, and his burial was the following day, the first Saturday.»

The hesitations surrounding the hour and date of Francisco’s death are due to an error of Canon Formigao, which was then repeated by the majority of authors.

In the first edition of this work, following all Fatima historians who base themselves on Ti Marto’s testimony, I said instead that in the absence of a parish priest, it was Father Moreira of Atouguia who had given Francisco the last sacraments. Father Kondor, however, is categorical:

«The note of the parish report would have been written differently by the parish priest had someone other than himself investigated the truth of the apparitions and observed the lucidity of the seer. Besides, in her Memoirs, Sister Lucy refers three times to the parish priest as the one presiding over the moving ceremony...

Father Moreira, when questioned in 1955, had no recollection of this act. He went further and actually denied that he had done it. *It must therefore be accepted as certain that it was Father Ferreira who administered Viaticum to the seer, interrogated him, and wrote down at the conclusion of the parish investigation the testimony he had received from the lips of Francisco, who was dying: "... He confirmed that he had seen a Lady at the Cova da Iria and at Valinhos".»*¹⁰⁸⁹

APPENDIX II - THREE WEEKS AFTER THE PONTEVEDRA APPARITION, MOTHER MAGALHAES GIVES HER OPINION OF LUCY

On December 29, 1925, Mother Magalhaes, Superior of the convent of Pontevedra, sent her best wishes to Bishop da Silva. She used this occasion to give him some news of his protégée, Maria das Dores. This letter is of interest to us for two reasons. First of all it reveals to us the unqualified admiration Mother Magalhaes had for the uncommon virtues of the Fatima seer. It is a priceless testimony coming from someone as well informed as Mother Magalhaes, who originally had very little sympathy for the little boarding student from Asilo del Vilar.¹⁰⁹⁰ Also, in this letter written scarcely three weeks after the event, the superior of Pontevedra already alludes to the apparition of December 10, 1925, during which Our Lady came to ask Lucy for the reparatory devotion on the first Saturdays of the month. Here is the integral text of this document:

«J. M. J. 29. 12. 1925.

«*Most Excellent Lord Don José,*

«*I wish Your Most Reverend Excellency happy holidays and a torrent of graces and blessings, not only to Your Excellency, but also to your dear diocese.*

«*I take advantage of this opportunity to give Your Excellency news of Maria das Dores which, thanks to God, are all consoling. She continues to prepare herself for religious life with much fervour, and has succeeded very well in not disedifying anyone. **She perseveres in her holy simplicity and humility so well that she charms all her companions.** I have assigned her the lowest and most humble tasks, but no matter what work I give her, the same thing always*

happens. At this moment she is the cook's assistant. She has already been at it for three weeks, and she could not be happier. **She has the wonderful gift of accepting the worst and whatever costs the most.** It is enough if she suspects that the cook cannot do a given thing because of her health; right away she springs into action to do her companion's work.

«For myself, I consider it a grace to have her here for these five months of preparation, and through her, I am counting on Our Lady to grant me special blessings for this house. And to be frank with Your Excellency, I must confess that I have already received very great graces! I never imagined that I would have the consolation of having her here! How good Our Lord is to have given her a religious vocation!

«But Your Reverence must not think that I am about to make myself her advocate now. **No, on the contrary, I even use a certain severity with her to see what that will bring.** Pray to Our Lord that with her I may learn to be good, so that at least in my old age I may become what I should be already, having led the religious life for so long. Sometimes I am ashamed to be beside her.

«I was also very happy about some news received recently: my brother, Father Magalhaes, is leaving for the seminary of Leiria. Very early! In the person of Your Excellency he will have a real Father. He too is very happy because of what I told him. May Our Lady grant him all the graces he will need to fulfil his duties, and I ask Your Excellency to bless me. I respectfully kiss Your Reverence's holy ring and I am, very respectfully, your humble servant in Jesus Christ.

Maria das Dores Magalhaes.
R. Sta. Dorotea, Travesia Isabel II,
Pontevedra, Spain

«P.S.: **Maria das Dores had already told me that she had received a great grace from the Most Holy Virgin here, and I don't doubt it because the child possesses virtue and simplicity in such great abundance that she must even charm the Most Holy Virgin!** In these matters I am the most sceptical person you could find in the world, but in her case I absolutely don't doubt it, whatever the case may be!

«I have never spoken to her on this subject, I can only listen to what she came to tell me spontaneously, because she judged it her duty to tell me. For all the

*difficulties she has, I send her to her spiritual director, (Father) Pereira Lopes, for him to resolve. For these matters I know absolutely nothing.»*¹⁰⁹¹

Along with Lucy's letter to Msgr. Pereira Lopes, written in mid-February, 1926, this letter of Mother Magalhaes of December 29, 1925, furnishes us – in contrast to Father Dhanis' unfounded criticisms – with the solid and indisputable proof of the authenticity of the Pontevedra apparitions of December 10, 1925 and February 15, 1926.

APPENDIX III - SISTER LUCY EXPLAINS THE REPARATORY DEVOTION OF THE FIRST SATURDAYS

Sister Lucy took this «lovable devotion» so much to heart that she constantly returns to it in her correspondence. Unquestionably there is nothing more capable of touching our hearts than this insistence of Our Lady's messenger. Here are some of these beautiful texts:

«I NEVER FEEL SO HAPPY AS WHEN THE FIRST SATURDAY ARRIVES...»

On November 1, 1927, she writes to her sponsor for confirmation, Dona Maria Filomena Morais de Miranda:

*«... I don't know if you already know about the reparatory devotion of the five Saturdays to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As it is still recent, I would like to inspire you to practice it, because it is requested by Our Dear Heavenly Mother and Jesus has manifested a desire that it be practised. Also, it seems to me that you would be fortunate, dear godmother, not only to know it and to give Jesus the consolation of practising it, **but also to make it known and embraced by many other persons.***

«It consists in this: During five months, on the first Saturday, to receive Jesus in Communion, recite a Rosary, keep Our Lady company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary,¹⁰⁹² and make a confession. This confession can be made a few days earlier, and if in this previous confession one has forgotten the (required) intention, it can be offered at the next confession, provided that on the first Saturday one receives Holy Communion in the state of grace, with the intention of making reparation for the offences against the Most

Holy Virgin which afflict Her Immaculate Heart.¹⁰⁹³

«It seems to me, my dear godmother, that we are fortunate to be able to give Our Dear Heavenly Mother this proof of love, for we know that She desires it to be offered to Her. **As for myself, I avow that I am never so happy as when the first Saturday arrives.** Isn't it true that our greatest happiness is to belong entirely to Jesus and Mary and to love Them, and Them alone, without reserve? We see this so clearly in the lives of the saints... They were happy because they loved, and we, my dear godmother, we must seek to love as they did, not only to enjoy Jesus, which is the least important – because if we do not enjoy Him here below, we will enjoy Him up above – **but to give Jesus and Mary the consolation of being loved... and in exchange for this love They will be able to save many souls.** Adieu, my dear godmother, I embrace you in the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.»¹⁰⁹⁴

On November 4, 1928, after several attempts to obtain an official approval from Bishop da Silva, she writes to Father Aparicio:

«I hope therefore that Our Good Lord will inspire His Excellency with a favourable response, and that, among so many thorns, I may gather the flower of seeing the maternal Heart of the Most Holy Virgin also honoured on this earth. This is my desire now, because it is also the will of Our Good Lord. **The greatest joy that I experience is to see the Immaculate Heart of our most tender Mother known, loved and consoled by means of this devotion.**»¹⁰⁹⁵

On March 31, 1929, Sister Lucy writes to Father Aparicio on the subject of Canon Formigao and Father Rodriguez, who desire to preach the reparatory devotion.

«I hope that Jesus will make them – according to the desire I have of spreading this lovable devotion – two ardent apostles of the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. **Your Reverence cannot imagine how great is my joy in thinking of the consolation which the Holy Hearts of Jesus (and Mary) will receive through this lovable devotion, and the great number of souls who will be saved through this lovable devotion.** I say, “who will be saved”, because not long ago, Our Good Lord in His infinite mercy asked me to seek to make reparation through my prayers and sacrifices, and preferably to perform reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and implore pardon and mercy in favour of souls who blaspheme against Her, because the Divine Mercy does not

*pardon these souls without reparation.»*¹⁰⁹⁶

«HERE IS MY WAY OF MAKING THE MEDITATIONS»

In this devotion which is so simple and so easy, Sister Lucy writes to her mother, «it seems to me that the fifteen minutes of meditation are what might give you some difficulty. But it is quite easy.» We have said that it is a question only «of keeping Our Lady company for fifteen minutes»; and it is not at all necessary to meditate on all fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, but one or two can be chosen. In a letter quoted by Father Martins, Sister Lucy writes:

«Here is my way of making the meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary on the first Saturdays: First mystery, the annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Our Lady. First prelude: to imagine myself seeing and hearing the Angel greet Our Lady with these words: “Hail Mary, full of grace.” Second prelude: I ask Our Lady to infuse into my soul a profound sentiment of humility.

«1st point: I will meditate on the manner in which Heaven proclaims that the Most Holy Virgin is full of grace, blessed among all women and destined to become the Mother of God.

«2nd point: The humility of Our Lady, recognizing Herself and declaring Herself to be the handmaid of the Lord.

«3rd point: How I must imitate Our Lady in Her humility, what are the faults of pride and arrogance through which I most often displease the Lord, and the means I must employ to avoid them, etc.

«On the second month, I make the meditation on the second joyful mystery. The third month, I make it on the third joyful mystery and so on, following the same method of meditating. When I have finished the five first Saturdays, I begin five others and meditate on the sorrowful mysteries, then the glorious ones, and when I have finished them, I start over again with the joyful ones.»¹⁰⁹⁷

Sister Lucy thus reveals to us that far from contenting herself with the five first Saturdays, every month she practices «the lovable reparatory devotion» indicated by Our Lady. Since it is a question of «consoling Our Heavenly Mother» and interceding so efficaciously for the salvation of souls, why not

follow her example and renew this pious practice often? We could then ask this good Mother, with the firm hope of being heard, to vouchsafe to grant particular assistance at the hour of death, «with all the graces necessary for salvation», to such or such a soul whom we confide to Her,¹⁰⁹⁸ as She has promised to us in return for this «little devotion» accomplished through love and a spirit of reparation.

APPENDIX IV - A MIRACULOUS HEALING OBTAINED BY SISTER LUCY

We have cited many examples of the extraordinary intercessory power which Jacinta and Francisco enjoyed after the apparitions. Here is an equally moving testimony concerning Sister Lucy a few months before the great apparition of Tuy, June 13, 1929. We can hardly do better than cite *in extenso* the account of this miraculous healing given by one of the witnesses, in response to our request:

«I, the undersigned Isabel Maria de Sousa Mendes, born at Zanzibar on October 17, 1915, the daughter of Aristide de Sousa Mendes and Angelina de Sousa Mendes, certify in my soul and conscience and on my Christian Faith, that the account of the facts related below is true, and is the exact expression of the events which took place at Tuy, in Spain.

«My father, having been appointed Portuguese consul at Vigo, installed his large family (twelve children) at Tuy, a town on the Portuguese border. In this city, there existed a convent with a school of Portuguese Dorothean Sisters, expelled from Portugal during the revolution of 1911. The Mother Superior at this time was the Reverend Mother Saraiva. It was in this convent that our parents brought us to school, my sisters and myself: Clotilda, my older sister by two years, and Joana, who was three years younger than myself.

«My parents, being very religious, were very much abreast – as were the children also – of the Fatima apparitions, and we were perfectly familiar with the physiognomy of Lucy, whose portraits and photos had appeared numerous times in the Portuguese press. Imagine our surprise, then, to meet Sister Lucy in this convent with her religious habit.

«Curious and indiscreet as one can be at that age, my sister Clotilda and I

questioned the Mother Superior on this subject. At first, she denied Lucy's presence in the convent, but faced with our repeated affirmations and insistence, she ended up admitting the fact. However, she asked us to keep the strictest secrecy, because nobody knew where Lucy was.

«We were driven to school by our servant, Adelaide Fernandes dos Anjos, who generally took with her our little sister, Teresinha do Menino Jesus (literally, “Little Teresa of the Child Jesus”, a name which my parents had expressly chosen after the birth of this child in 1925, the year of Saint Therese's canonization).

«Each day we met Sister Lucy in the corridors of the school, going about her work. And each time, she played with our little sister and exchanged a few words with Adelaide. In January of 1928, our little sister became ill (see the account of her illness given by my father in a review dedicated to Saint Therese, a photocopy of which I will add as a supplement).¹⁰⁹⁹

«After some time, Sister Lucy, noticing our little sister's absence, questioned Adelaide on this subject. The latter told Sister Lucy about the girl's grave, very grave, medical situation and the despair of our parents. ***Sister Lucy immediately told her to tell our parents not to worry because Teresinha would be healed soon. The “miraculous” conclusion of this healing is described very well in my father's account, indicated above.***¹¹⁰⁰ If my father made no reference to Sister Lucy there, it is due to the fact that we had to keep her presence at Tuy secret, on the express request of the Mother Superior, and for this reason he thanks Sister Lucy for her intervention by referring to all the Dorothean Sisters.

«The witnesses of this prodigious fact who are still living, besides myself, are:

– My sister Clotilda de Sousa Mendes, born at Zanzibar on November 28, 1913, residing at Carnaxide (Postal Code 2795, Celula 4, Bloco 3, Lote C, II esq. Portugal).

– Adelaide dos Anjos, a Dorothean nun of the convent of Covilha, Portugal.

– Teresinha, the one miraculously cured (residing at: 892 La Playat Ct., Manteca, CA 95336, USA). She is married and the mother of a family.

«The other witnesses – parents or older brothers have since died. My other brothers and sisters were too young at the time or were not yet born (fourteen

children).

Sesimbra, September 28, 1984,
Isabel Maria de Sousa Mendes¹¹⁰¹

APPENDIX V - THE FIRST ATTEMPTS OF FATHER GONÇALVES TO PASS ON OUR LADY'S REQUESTS (May - June 1930)

We have described how in May of 1930 – and perhaps even a few weeks or a few months earlier – Father Gonçalves had asked Sister Lucy to write down with precision Our Lady's requests concerning the consecration of Russia and the reparatory devotion of the first Saturdays of the month.¹¹⁰² Here is the vitally important letter, which he addressed to the Bishop of Leiria on June 13, 1930:¹¹⁰³

«This sheet of paper which I am sending Your Excellency¹¹⁰⁴ is transcribed to the letter, so as to lose none of the flavour of the paper Sister Maria das Dores sent me. Here is the reason. She has made her confession to me and confided in me, although not very often, undoubtedly because I replaced Father Aparicio here at Tuy, and he was her director before that...»

After making a brief summary of the letter which Sister Lucy sent him in May of 1930,¹¹⁰⁵ and mentioning the seer's anxieties, Father Gonçalves adds:

*«I tried to reassure her (for Sister Lucy feared that she was not doing enough to pass on Our Lord's requests). To give her soul complete peace and tranquillity, I told her, very insistently, that I would take care of the matter myself. **Somehow I would send everything to the Holy Father, and then leave the result in the hands of Divine Providence.** When, for our part, we do everything that we can, Our Lord will do the rest.*

«When I told Sister Dores that I needed some “mediator”, she told me that she greatly desired it to be Your Excellency, in whom she has the greatest trust. She greatly desires this reparatory devotion to spread, but it would also please her immensely if its origin were hidden as far as possible. I therefore did what I promised.¹¹⁰⁶ Now Your Excellency will do what he thinks best, or at the very

least place this in the archives.

«Sister Dores has been in bed the past few days because of a mild case of flu, but this is no cause for alarm. She hopes to see you and speak to Your Excellency soon, for it seems that you promised her a little visit on the occasion of the Apostolate of Prayer Congress.

«Your Excellency will certainly not remember the author of this letter. But I went to see you two years ago, accompanying the Reverend Father-Visitor Henrique Carvajol...»

On July 1, 1930, Bishop da Silva sent Father Gonçalves this laconic response:

*«I have received (the copy of Sister Lucy's text) and I thank you for it. I am very touched by the particular letter of your Reverence. **I am already aware of the subject.** If God wills, I will pass by there next month and we will speak to each other. I recommend myself, and the needs of my diocese, to your Reverence's prayers.»*

When he came to Tuy, Bishop da Silva did in fact speak with Sister Lucy on August 29, 1930. But he almost certainly did nothing to pass on Our Lady's requests. We may believe that Father Gonçalves, faced with the bishop's inertia, decided to employ other means, but only after going to the Bishop of Leiria first. This was in conformity with the express desire of Sister Lucy, who always desired to make known the messages received from Heaven through the ordinary hierarchical way. In effect it is possible to overstress his promise to Sister Lucy: *«... **I told her, after having been insistent, that I would take care of the matter myself. Somehow I would send everything to the Holy Father...**»*

Many subsequent declarations of Sister Lucy assume that in fact Father Gonçalves began an initiative of approaching Rome, which was successful. We have cited her letter to Pius XII and her declaration to Father Jongen in 1946.¹¹⁰⁷ Her written response to Mr. William Thomas Walsh's questions in 1947 is no less explicit:

«Did you write the wishes of Our Lady to Pope Pius XI?» the American journalist asked. Sister Lucy answered: «In 1929 (or more probably 1930), I wrote the desires and requests of Our Lord and of Our Lady, which were the same, and delivered the writing to my confessor; he was then the Reverend

*Father Bernardo Gonçalves, a Jesuit, now Superior of the Mission of Zambesia Leifidizi: **His Reverence transmitted it to His Excellency the Most Reverend Bishop of Leiria** (on June 13, 1930) **and some time later it was transmitted to His Holiness Pius XI.** I do not know the exact date when it was communicated to His Holiness or the name of the person of whom my confessor availed himself. But I, remember well that my confessor told me that the Holy f-Father had heard the message graciously and had promised to consider it.»*¹¹⁰⁸

APPENDIX VI - NEW ATTEMPTS BY FATHER GONÇALVES TO OBTAIN THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA (September 1936 - January 1937)

In the first edition of this work in January, 1984, I stressed «*the leading role*» Father Gonçalves «*undoubtedly*» played in getting Bishop da Silva himself to write to the Holy Father, to pass on Our Lady's requests to him.¹¹⁰⁹ However, I presented only a few bits of evidence of this successful intervention by the seer's spiritual director, which finally resulted in the Bishop of Leiria's letter to Pope Pius XI in March, 1937.¹¹¹⁰

Today, thanks to the new book by Father Martins, *Novos Documentos*, published at Sao Paolo in the summer of 1984, the insistent initiatives of Father Gonçalves are better known to us. They deserve our attention.

After promising Sister Lucy that he would take care of the matter – «*which filled me with joy*», Sister Lucy responded to him on June 5, 1936, «*because it seems to me now that Our Lord's desires are going to be realized*»¹¹¹¹ – on September 29, 1936, Father Gonçalves sent Bishop da Silva a letter whose importance can hardly be exaggerated:

«*Most Excellent and Reverend Don José,*

«*...I am going to see if I succeed in saying today, by this letter, what I should have liked to communicate to Your Excellency in person.*

«*Through the letter enclosed with this one, you will know what it concerns...*

¹¹¹²

«Already some time ago, when I was at Tuy, I sent Your Excellency all the documentation concerning this same subject of the consecration of Russia.¹¹¹³

«This year, Sister Lucy insisted again on the same idea, asking me to pass all this on to His Grace the Bishop of Leiria. With her permission, I tried to examine the supernatural probability of the subject of the letter, here at Entre Rios with Reverend Father Isacio Moran, a very spiritual person full of experience in the direction of souls...

«... Well! After having examined the subject as best as possible, Father Moran expressly said to me that he thought it very probable that such was the will of Our Lord God to save Russia; that I could even communicate this to Your Excellency as his personal belief and his considered opinion... **He judges that it is completely fitting for us to insist with Rome...**

«For my part, I do not want **Our Lord's will not to be done** because of my negligence. For this reason I desire to put everything in Your Excellency's hands, as Sister Lucy asks me.»¹¹¹⁴

On January 24, 1937, not having received any response, Father Gonçalves wrote to Bishop da Silva again:

«Most Excellent and Reverend Don José,

«... It has not yet been possible for me to speak with Your Excellency on the subject which had led me to write to you from Entre Rios last September.

«It concerns the request of Sister Lucy, or rather the request of Our Lord through His intermediary, to obtain the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

«Since the outbreak of the revolution in Spain, Sister Lucy has not written to me again, nor have I written to her. There is a difficulty with censorship... But all these events in Europe and the state of the Holy Father's health these past few days have reminded me of the dialogue in the letter written by Sister Lucy last May,¹¹¹⁵ a letter which I sent Your Excellency in September.

«I do not know what was done... but Father Moran has recommended that I insist with Your Excellency to entrust the matter to someone who goes to Rome or is already there. Let it not happen that through our negligence or our lack of

*interest, Our Lord's request might not reach the Holy Father's hands or come to his knowledge...»*¹¹¹⁶

As we have seen, in March of 1937, Bishop da Silva, who had a very high esteem for Father Moran, finally decided to write to Pope Pius XI.

We must also point out that a few months later, on August 14, 1937, Father Aparicio wrote in turn to the Bishop of Leiria to suggest to him the idea of an official approval of the reparatory devotion:

«Since the devotion and practice of the five first Saturdays in honour of Our Lady, which has the purpose of making reparation to Her Immaculate Heart for the blasphemies and ingratitude She receives from Her children, are already widely propagated, many people are asking me whether the hour and the opportune occasion has come to give it ecclesiastical approval.»¹¹¹⁷

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(1) *Actualité religieuse, Les Etudes*, July-August 1967, p. 83.

(2) Quoted by De Marchi, *Témoignages sur les apparitions de Fatima*, p. 108.

(3) Preface to *Jacinta*, by Canon Galamba. *Obras pastorais*, Vol. II, p. 329, 333.

(4) III, p. 108, 111. Recall that we quote from Lucy's Memoirs in the English version edited by Father Kondor, annotated by Father Alonso, indicating only the number of the Memoir and the page quoted from. (Postulation Centre, Fatima, 1976)

(5) Cf. the photograph of the original in *Documentos*, p. 218-220. In the manuscript of the Fourth Memoir, she put a period before «to prevent this...», which moreover does not correspond to the «three things» she mentioned as constituting the Secret, p. 338-340 (*Documentos de Fatima*, published by Antonio Maria Martins, S.J., Porto, 1976).

(6) Preface to the third edition of *Jacinta*, 1942. *Obras pastorais*, Vol. II, p. 333.

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(7) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 179, sq. (III, p. 108; IV, p. 165-167).

(8) On the subject of Heaven, the series of twenty-two *Pages mystiques* of our Father, the Abbé de Nantes, is must reading. They are at once mystical, biblical and always very concrete. There is nothing more beautiful to give a glimpse and a lively desire for the joys of Heaven. Some titles are sufficient to evoke this prodigious richness: "The home awaiting us", "The family reunited", "Friendship recovered", "In the communion of saints", "I shall go to see Her one day, in Heaven, in our homeland", "In the fire of the Holy Spirit", "Towards the Father", "Jesus, my happiness", "The Heaven of poor people", "The secret of a nuptial love", "Oh! my final secret", etc. (*Contre-Réforme catholique*, nos. 103 to 128, March 1976 - April 1978, Vols. VIII, IX and X.)

(9) "Concerning Fatima and criticism", *Nouvelle Revue théologique*, 1952, p. 591-592.

(10) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 399, 404-405; and the review *Streven*, 1944, p. 196-198.

(11) NRT, p. 592.

(12) *Catéchisme des incroyants*, Vol. II, p. 186, Flammarion, 1930.

(13) P. 118.

(14) *La foi catholique. Réponse à “Pierres vivantes”, catéchisme moderniste.* CRC no. 183, All Saints, 1982, p. 20.

(15) NRT, p. 591.

(16) *Etre chrétien*, p. 425, Seuil 1978. To measure the extent of the apostasy we have reached, it will not be in vain to quote a long passage concerning hell: «In any case, *hell* is not to be conceived mythologically as a place located in the upper world or the lower world. It signifies, in a theological sense, the exclusion of communion with the living God as a last and final possibility, an exclusion presented figuratively under a thousand different images, and which nevertheless remains inexpressible. When it speaks of hell, the New Testament does not intend to pass on information on the beyond destined to satisfy curiosity or the imagination. It is for this world that it means to recall the extreme gravity of God’s demand, and the urgency of man’s conversion here and now. The “eternity” of the punishment of hell (of “fire”), which the New Testament has affirmed many times in figurative terms, remains subordinate to God and to His will. Some neo-testamentary passages, too isolated to balance those we have just discussed, suggest, at the moment of the final consummation, *a reconciliation for all, a universal mercy.*» (p. 425-426.) And here we have the old heresy of Origen revived, the apocatastasis, a heresy which has no foundation in Holy Scripture, for not one of the rare texts brought forward even suggests this solution, which is as convenient as it is false.

Alas! Hans Kung is not the only “master in Israel” to profess such a heresy. Karl Rahner also dares to declare: «However, I have the feeling that we can say: I hope – no, I know – that the final conclusion of the world’s history will be such that *what the traditional theology understands by the name of “hell” will no longer be a reality.*» In other words, hell will not be eternal!

And he continues: «How, in the last analysis, can the mercy of God, which the present Pope has wanted to celebrate, coexist with His justice and with the possibility that a man, by his free decision, would go to perdition? I would not venture to propose here who knows what “synthesis”. As a theologian and a Christian, I know that I must reckon with *the possibility of this perdition. Still, there is no need to affirm that it is really actualized.*» What does that mean? That hell is only a purely theoretical possibility. Let us sleep on, calmly: if it exists, hell is empty (Interview with La Croix, April 13, 1983, p. 9).

We find the same reductionist theology in François Varillon, *La souffrance de Dieu*, p. 110. (Le Centurion, 1975.) And even in Urs von Balthasar (Cf. CRC 128, April 1978, p. 14.)

(17) Dom Jean-Nesmy has very justly remarked as much: *Lucie raconte*

Fatima, p. 212.

(18) *Pages mystiques*, “*L’enfer après Jésus-Christ*”, CRC no. 93, p. 12, June 1975.

(19) Sister Lucy was glad that Our Lady asked her to keep secret, for a long time, the description of this terrible vision. Being still a child, she would have been incapable of expressing the reality of it with exactitude. She writes in 1941, «For me, keeping silent has been a great grace. What would have happened had I described hell? Being unable to find words which exactly express the reality – *for what I say is nothing and gives only a feeble idea of it all...*» III, p. 115. Cf. her letter of August 31, 1941, to Father Gonçalves, where she expresses the same feelings (*Documentos*, p. 445).

(20) In the face of all the minimizations of the rationalist apologetic, our Father has never failed to affirm the literal truth of biblical symbolism concerning Heaven or hell. In it, he explains, we must see the adequate expression, the only one willed by God to make us understand realities that surpass us. Cf. his *Pages mystiques* on hell: CRC 92, May 1975; CRC 93, June 1975; CRC 79, April 1974. The doctrine set out there exactly corresponds to the Fatima message.

(21) Apoc. 19:20; 14:10; 20:10.

(22) III, p. 110.

(23) Apoc. 9:1-11.

(24) Apoc. 12:3.

(25) I Pet. 5:8. On this theme of cruel and deadly beasts as symbols of evil and the demons, mentioned many times in the Bible, cf. the article “Bête et Bêtes” in *Vocabulaire de théologie biblique*, p. 98-101. Cerf, 1966.

(26) Jude 6, 7.

(27) Apoc. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8.

(28) «Concentration camps are nothing, the worst tortures men have invented to make their fellow man suffer are nothing compared to the sufferings of the damned. All this exists here below and is permitted by God precisely to make us fear what is worse...

«No, life is not misleading and nobody will be able to say that he did not know when already, by the light of the Gospel, all human joys and sufferings are like a faint image of the punishments and rewards of hell and Heaven. Hell is present among us, frightful enough to make us horrified! And Heaven is even more present, already ravishing us and filling us, to attach us to it! But right until the end, nobody must forget the remembrance of both the one and the other, so as to be attached to his Saviour by the double and triple bond of fear, hope and love...» (Abbé Georges de Nantes, CRC 93, June 1975, p. 12.)

(29) Mt. 18:8-9.

(30) Mt. 25:41; 25:46.

(31) In the account where she describes how one day, being in prayer, she seemed to be transported body and soul to hell, Saint Teresa of Avila insists particularly on this suffering: «In my soul I felt a fire whose nature I am powerless to describe, while my body went through intolerable torments... If I tell you that it was as if your soul was being continually wrenched away from itself, it is nothing because in this case it is somebody else who seems to take away your life. But here the soul itself tears itself to pieces. I confess that I can hardly give an idea of *this interior fire* and this despair which are combined with such terrible torments. Being tortured by the fire of this world is almost nothing compared with the fire of hell. I was terrified, and although about six years have gone by since then, such is my terror in writing these lines that my blood runs cold in my veins, right where I am...» Auto-biography, chap. 32.

(32) III, p. 116.

(33) The fact is solidly attested by the concordant and repeated declarations of Ti Marto, Maria Carreira and Antonio Baptista.

(34) III, p. 109.

(35) IV, p. 132.

(36) IV, p. 143.

(37) IV, p. 143.

(38) I, p. 30.

(39) III, p. 109-110.

(40) Cf. our reproduction, Vol. I, among the photographs following p. 270.

(41) III, p. 110.

(42) III, p. 110.

(43) III, p. 114.

(44) Quoted by Alonso, *The Secret of Fatima: Fact and Legend*, p. 106.

(45) A.M. Martins, *Cartas da Irma Lucia*, p. 120-122, Porto, 1979. Later on we will quote from this important letter at length. Unfortunately, Father Martins does not give us the exact date of its writing.

(46) *Our Lady of Fatima*, p. 219, Image Books, 1954.

(47) III, p. 110.

(48) III, p. 110.

(49) III, p. 110.

(50) According to Mother Godinho's testimony. Cf. De Marchi, p. 279 and 274; III, p. 111.

(51) III, p. 109.

(52) Quoted by Alonso, *La vérité sur le Secret de Fatima*, p. 92.

(53) Mt. 16:26. Quoted by the review, *Les Voyants de Fatima*, bulletin for the beatification causes for Francisco and Jacinta, September-December 1978, p.7.

(54) *Carnets spirituels, Retraites et méditations*, p. 29; Lethielleux 1981.

(55) Read the beautiful *Page Mystique* where our Father places this vital truth in bold relief: CRC 92, May 1975.

(56) *Fatima et le Coeur Immaculé de Marie*, MSC, p. 36; cf. p. 61.

(57) Quoted by Alonso, *The Secret of Fatima: Fact and Legend*, p. 110.

(58) Homily II, on *Missus est*.

(59) Cf. CRC 40, January 1971, *Il y a cent ans, Pontmain*.

(60) Interrogation of September 27, De Marchi, p. 170. Lucy gave the same answer to Father Lacerda on October 19, 1917. Cf. Martins dos Reis, *Sintese*, p. 44.

(61) Quoted by Alonso, op. cit., p. 109.

(62) *Our Lady of Fatima*, p. 219-220.

(63) Quoted by Alonso, *La vérité sur le Secret de Fatima*, p. 93.

(64) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 158-159; p. 163-165.

(65) III, p. 111-112.

(66) III, p. 112.

(67) III, p. 116.

(68) III, p. 116.

(69) Letter to Mother Cunha Mattos, April 14, 1945, FCM, p. 21-22. Cf. our Vol. III, p. 150-151.

(70) Letter of May 27, 1943, to the Bishop of Gurza. FCM, p. 62-63. Cf. our Vol. III, p. 149-150.

(71) Let us point out, however, that this “suffering”, this “sadness” of the Heavenly Father, or of Jesus since His Ascension, are to be understood analogically. They are not suffered passively as with us, but on the contrary freely willed and chosen as the ultimate expression of Their mercy towards sinners called to conversion. They are only a manifestation of God’s love for sinners, a love which is sovereignly free and gratuitous, and which is not irrevocable.

(72) Cf. *Le Saint Suaire de Turin, preuve de la Mort et de la Résurrection du Christ*, by Brother Bruno Bonnet-Eymard, member of the scientific congresses of Turin (1978) and Bologne (1981). This fascinating and exhaustive study, both from the theological, exegetical and scientific viewpoint, takes into account all the most recent discoveries of the experts (Maison Saint-Joseph, 1982).

(73) Ps. 69:21: «*Improperium expectavit cor meum et miseriam. Et sustinui qui simul constrictaretur et non fuit; et qui consolaretur, et non inveni. Et dederunt in escam meam fel; et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto.*»

(74) In his encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, on the reparation due the Sacred Heart of Jesus from everyone, Pope Pius XI wrote: «In His apparitions to Margaret Mary, when He revealed His infinite charity to her, at the same time Christ let her perceive *a sort of sadness*, complaining of so many and such grave outrages, which the ingratitude of men made Him undergo... Thus we are able now, and *we even must console this Sacred Heart*, unceasingly wounded by the sins of ingrates, *in a mysterious yet real manner...*» And he mentions the beautiful words of Saint Augustine: «take a person who loves: he will feel what I am saying.» May 8, 1928, *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, vol. IV, p. 106-108 (Bonne Presse, 1932).

(75) IV, p. 129.

(76) IV, p. 133.

(77) However, let us beware of the foolish presumption of modern man, who dares to believe himself indispensable to God! The exposition of Father Manaranche concludes in this aberration in *La souffrance de Dieu* (p. 110, Le Centurion, 1976): God could not condemn anyone to eternity in hell without necessarily inflicting an eternal torment on Himself!

But this is failing to understand the sanctity of the just Judge, who the more He showed them, in the beginning, the excesses of His Divine Mercy, the more He shall show Himself to be pitiless towards the obstinate rebels.

(78) IV, p. 141-142.

(79) IV, p. 135 and 141. Cf. our Vol. I, p. 115, 120, 136-137.

(80) IV, p. 129.

(81) IV, p. 135-136.

(82) IV, p. 139-140.

(83) IV, p. 140-141.

(84) IV, p. 145.

(85) IV, p. 144.

(86) IV, p. 144-145.

(87) IV, p. 149.

(88) On the symbolic vision which also showed it to them, cf. our Vol. I, p. 165-168.

(89) De Marchi, p. 241.

(90) p. 242.

(91) IV, p. 142.

(92) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 248-249.

(93) IV, p. 146.

(94) IV, p. 146.

(95) De Marchi, *Témoignages*, p. 251. The author, assisted by the great

Portuguese writer Dona Maria de Freitas (cf. Alonso, *Historia da Literatura*, p. 56), has reviewed in a quasi exhaustive manner, and presented in a moving fashion all testimonies concerning the sickness and death of Jacinta and Francisco. Along with Lucy's Memoirs, this work constitutes the principal source of our exposition.

(96) Cf. Vicomte de Montelo, *Les grandes merveilles de Fatima*, p. 105 (1927, French edition, Pelican 1930).

(97) IV, p. 148; cf. p. 143.

(98) II, p. 94.

(99) De Marchi, p. 179.

(100) I, p. 43.

(101) De Marchi, p. 252-253.

(102) Montelo, *Les grandes merveilles de Fatima*, p. 106.

(103) De Marchi, p. 252.

(104) De Marchi, p. 180.

(105) IV, p. 142-143.

(106) IV, p. 142-143.

(107) IV, p. 142.

(108) IV, p. 187.

(109) IV, p. 188.

(110) IV, p. 188.

(111) IV, p. 148.

(112) IV, p. 188-189.

(113) De Marchi, p. 185.

(114) De Marchi, p. 173.

(115) IV, p. 149-150.

(116) De Marchi, p. 257.

(117) Ibid.

(118) IV, p. 150.

(119) IV, p. 150.

(120) IV, p. 149.

(121) Mk. 10, 13-16; cf. Mt. 18:3 & 19:14; Lk. 11:25.

(122) De Marchi, p. 258.

(123) IV, p. 151.

(124) De Marchi, p. 258.

(125) IV, p. 151.

(126) On the recognition of Francisco's mortal remains, cf. da Fonseca, *Nossa Senhora da Fatima*, p. 172-173. The diocesan informative process in view of his beatification was opened at Leiria on December 21, 1949, at the same time

as Jacinta's. It was passed on to Rome in 1979 (cf. S. Martins dos Reis, *Na Orbita de Fatima, reacções e contrastes*, p. 56-57).

(127) Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, Chap. V, art. 5.

(128) Ibid., no. 155. Quoted by De Marchi, p. 240-241.

(129) As surprising as it might seem, let us point out that much hesitation exists among Fatima historians on the exact hour of Francisco's death. To realize that, it is sufficient to compare the successive editions of Canon Barthas (Merv. In., p. 172; Merv. XXe s., p. 178; TPE, p. 176). In 1969, following De Marchi, he finally opted for ten o'clock in the morning (*Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 202). Dom Jean-Nesmy (p. 145) and Fernando Leite (*Francisco*, p. 76) say the same.

But Father Alonso (Sister Lucy's Memoirs, French version, p. 152, note 10, Téqui, 1980) prefers to go by the testimony of the parish priest of Fatima, who in a text written two weeks after the event explicitly indicates Friday, April 4, at ten o'clock in the evening. Father Kondor, vice-postulator of the little seer's cause, adopts the same solution. Finally, Joao Marto, Francisco's elder brother, to whom we were recently (July 12, 1983) able to pose the question at Aljustrel, answered us in the same sense without hesitation.

(130) IV, p. 144.

(131) Cf. supra, p. 40-48.

(132) III, p. 109; cf. p. 114.

(133) IV, p. 109.

(134) I, p. 30.

(135) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 244-247.

(136) I, p. 40-41.

(137) I, p. 36-37.

(138) I, p. 31.

(139) I, p. 31.

(140) III, p. 111.

(141) I, p. 41.

(142) I, p. 33.

(143) *Témoignages sur les Apparitions*, p. 243. Written in response to a request of Msgr. Vidal of November 3, 1917, completed on August 6, 1918, the Ferreira report was not passed on to the patriarchate of Lisbon until April 18, 1919.

(144) III, p. 112-113.

(145) III, p. 113. Cf. I, p. 34; II, p. 83.

(146) III, p. 113. In a copy of this text intended for Father Gonçalves, Lucy gives this other version: «... so many roads, so many paths full of dead people,

losing their blood?» (FCM, p. 77.)

(147) III, p. 113.

(148) III, p. 109.

(149) III, p. 114.

(150) I, p. 34. In her Second Memoir, Sister Lucy reports this other memory: «I have already told Your Excellency in the account I have written about my cousin, how two holy priests came and spoke to us about His Holiness, and told us of his great need of prayers. *From that time on, there was not a prayer or sacrifice that we offered to God which did not include an invocation for His Holiness.* We grew to love the Holy Father so deeply, that when the parish priest told my mother that I would probably have to go to Rome to be interrogated by His Holiness, I clapped my hands with joy and said to my cousins: “Won’t it be wonderful if I can go and see the Holy Father!” They burst into tears and said: “We can’t go, but we can offer this sacrifice for him.”» II, p. 83.

This text should not fool us: if Sister Lucy insists on the visit of the two priests who explained to them who the Pope was, it is because she had not yet revealed the great Secret. On the contrary, in her Third Memoir, she clearly shows that it was the Secret, and Jacinta’s visions, that made them understand how the Pope needed their prayers. «Poor Holy Father, Jacinta exclaimed immediately after her vision, we must pray very much for him!» (III, p. 113.)

(151) In 1936, Our Lord spoke to his confidante, concerning the Pope and the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, this sentence heavy with meaning: «The Holy Father! Pray a great deal for the Holy Father! He will do it, but it will be late.» (Letter to Father Gonçalves, May 18, 1936, *Documentos*, p. 413.)

In a letter to Father Aparicio on March 2, 1945, Sister Lucy clearly implies that the Holy Father’s great sufferings announced by the Secret, and no doubt by Jacinta’s vision also, still concerned the future: she writes, «Over there (in Brazil) do they pray for the Holy Father? It is necessary to pray unceasingly for His Holiness. *Days of great torment and affliction still await him.*» (Doc., p. 449.)

(152) I, p. 37.

(153) I, p. 23; cf. our Vol. I, p. 74-77.

(154) I, p. 42.

(155) II, p. 101.

(156) Ibid.

(157) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 81.

(158) I, p. 42.

(159) II, p. 112; I, p. 39.

(160) I, p. 45.

(161) De Marchi, p. 262.

(162) II, p. 94; cf. I, p. 43.

(163) I, p. 45.

(164) II, p. 94.

(165) II, p. 96; cf. our Vol. I, p. 246.

(166) I, p. 41-42.

(167) II, p. 95; cf. I, p. 41-42.

(168) II, p. 97.

(169) I, p. 41-42. Is it necessary to stress that our three seers were too humble, too self-forgetful to seek, by these almost incessant mutual disclosures, recognition of their self-worth by glorying in their sacrifices? We see quite the contrary, in the little remarks they made to one another; they had but one purpose: to encourage each other to better practice Our Lady's great requests, and their common commitments to Her.

But in addition to this supernatural emulation, the Holy Spirit, who without any doubt was moving them interiorly to this great openness of soul between themselves, also had a greater design: that of making known one day, to a multitude of souls, "the little way of spiritual childhood" chosen by Our Lady for Her three messengers. Their simple, childlike manner of offering the Immaculate Heart of Mary innumerable little sacrifices would have the value of an example.

Like Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, who also always seemed to be boasting of her slightest acts of virtue, our three seers had received a charism: that of teaching, through example, the practice of a spiritual way.

(170) I, p. 43.

(171) I, p. 43.

(172) I, p. 38.

(173) I, p. 41.

(174) III, p. 117.

(175) Ibid.

(176) In spite of the contrary testimony of Mr. Marto, who believes he remembered that Jacinta was admitted to communion beginning in May 1918, it appears certain that she never received communion at the church of Fatima. Cf., in De Marchi, Father Simonin's notes, p. 243-244, 275. Does Ti Marto confuse her here with the first communion of one of his daughters older than Jacinta? It is possible.

(177) III, p. 117.

(178) I, p. 39.

(179) Ibid.

(180) II, p. 101.

(181) De Marchi, p. 263.

(182) I, p. 43. On the subject of Jacinta's patience, the apparently dissonant testimony of Dr. Preto must be mentioned here. In 1946, during the course of an audience he had with her, Father Jongen made the objection to Sister Lucy: «“In your Memoirs, you speak of Jacinta's patience during her illness. However, Dr. Preto, who took care of her at the hospital of Ourem, told me that Jacinta had no more patience than the other children.” “I don't know. When I saw her, she was always joyful and full of courage.” “The same doctor recalls that Jacinta reacted strongly when he made her suffer.” “Well”, the Sister said, smiling, “do you find that so unusual for a child?”...» (Quoted by De Marchi, p. 343.)

These answers are full of good sense. In effect, two remarks are necessary: first of all, we would like to know the disposition of the above-mentioned doctor towards the little seer, for his objectivity is not necessarily above all suspicion.

In addition, the lack of precision of the testimony needs to be stressed: the seer reacted strongly when he made her suffer. What does that mean? Did he imagine that a nine-year-old child – because she had seen the Holy Virgin – was going to behave with stoic impassivity when he removed the dressing from the open wound in her side?

The astonishing thing, on the contrary, is that instead of being all absorbed by her sufferings, the little seer, immediately afterwards, thought of offering them in sacrifice.

(183) I, p. 43.

(184) De Marchi, p. 265.

(185) Ibid.

(186) Quoted by J.M. Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao, homem de Deus*, p. 296-297 (Ediçoes Santuario, Fatima, 1979).

(187) II, p. 95.

(188) I, p. 44.

(189) IV, p. 185-186.

(190) Ibid.

(191) IV, p. 184-185.

(192) III, p. 113. The seer's prayer really was heard since, miraculously, neither the war in Spain nor the Second World War reached “The Land of Holy Mary”.

(193) I, p. 44.

(194) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 255.

(195) II, p. 95.

(196) I, p. 37.

(197) II, p. 96; cf. I, p. 44.

(198) I, p. 44-45.

(199) I, p. 45.

(200) I, p. 45.

(201) III, p. 114-115.

(202) I, p. 45.

(203) I, p. 45-46.

(204) I, p. 45.

(205) 1879-1963.

(206) In a long report written at the request of the Bishop of Leiria, Dr. Lisboa wrote down all his recollections dealing with the final weeks of the little seer. This text is an important document widely used by Fatima historians.

(207) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 270-271.

(208) p. 272.

(209) I, p. 46; cf. De Marchi, p. 272.

(210) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 273.

(211) Ibid. In fact, Olimpia remained at Lisbon for two weeks, and did not return to Aljustrel until February 5.

(212) Born in 1877, she died at Lisbon on June 24, 1960, in her orphanage.

(213) De Marchi, p. 276.

(214) De Marchi, p. 276.

(215) Declaration made during the Third “International Fatima Seminar”. *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, 1972, p. 438.

(216) Out of concern for historical exactitude, in the present account we shall retain only the statements of Mother Godinho which are completely plausible and raise no difficulty, reserving for later the deeper examination of the complex and delicate critical problem raised by the innumerable statements – sentences, prophecies and secrets – attributed by her to Jacinta during the latter’s brief stay at Lisbon.

(217) De Marchi, p. 277.

(218) Declarations of Mother Godinho to an official interrogation. Quoted by Barthas, *Il était trois petits enfants*, p. 199.

(219) De Marchi, p. 276.

(220) De Marchi, p.277.

(221) I, p. 46.

(222) Referring to the Baron of Alvaiazere. The Baron, a stupefied witness of the solar miracle (cf. our Vol. I, p. 339-340), had become the most intimate and effective friend of Ti Marto. With Canon Formigao, he organized the journey and hospitalization of Jacinta, while helping defray the expenses involved.

(223) De Marchi, p. 274.

(224) p. 282.

(225) Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 269.

(226) De Marchi, p. 284. In an appendix we will quote Dr. Freire's testimony.

(227) Formigao, *Les grandes merveilles*, p. 112.

(228) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 285. Cf. our Vol. I, p. 16.

(229) Formigao, op. cit., p. 112.

(230) P. 285.

(231) Although she contented herself with repeating to her entourage that Our Lady would come to look for her soon, her surprising attitude on this evening of February 20 proves that she knew more about it, and indeed knew the precise hour of her departure for Heaven.

(232) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 286.

(233) Father De Marchi notes that the young nurse Aurora Gomes was present at her death. But it is not astonishing, if this was the case, that she did not relate for us any words, any gesture of the little seer during the two long hours separating the moment when she made her confession, still perfectly lucid, and the instant when she left this earth? Father Castelbranco states that Jacinta «expired alone, during a brief absence of the nurse» (*Le Prodige inouï de Fatima*, p. 168. Cf. also Fernando Leite in *Jacinta*: «Nobody was present at her final moments»).

Be that as it may, it is certain that Jacinta had no loved ones near her who could support her by their affectionate presence and prayers.

(234) Report of Dr. Lisboa.

(235) De Marchi, p. 289.

(236) Lisboa report, quoted by De Marchi, p. 287-291.

(237) Jacinta and Francisco of Fatima will undoubtedly be the first little children who are not martyrs to be declared saints by the Church. Indeed up to the present, the competent Roman Congregation "consigned to the archives" all processes concerning children who were not martyrs, given the fact that it seemed difficult to establish the heroicity of their virtues.

The question was recently examined at Rome, and was decided in the affirmative by Msgr. Casieri, an official of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Opened in 1949 and transmitted to the Vatican in 1979, the beatification processes of the two Fatima seers are thus well on their way, especially since both have already accomplished more miracles than is required by the procedure in force (cf. on this subject the many articles appearing in *Les voyants de Fatima*, bulletin for the causes of beatification of Francisco and Jacinta published by vice-postulator, Father Luis Kondor, SVD. Vice Postulação,

Rua. S. Pedro 9, Apart. 6. P. 2496 Fatima Codex, Portugal).*

(238) I, p.20.

EDITOR'S NOTE: On May 13, 1989, the Vatican took the first step towards beatifying the children, declaring them "Venerable", and on May 13, 2000, the children were beatified by Pope John Paul II.

(239) IV, p. 183-184.

(240) IV, p. 186-187.

(241) I, p. 38.

(242) I, p. 39-40.

(243) I, p. 40.

(244) IV, p. 175-176.

(245) Quoted by Bishop Cosme do Amaral, present Bishop of Leiria, in his sermon of April 4, 1982. *Les voyants de Fatima*, January-April, 1982.

(246) Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 269-270.

(247) See further on, p. 412.

(248) Testimony of Mother Godinho, Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 278-279.

(249) Cf. Gerald Freire, *O Segredo de Fatima*, p. 110-111. Ed. do Santuario de Fatima. 1978.

(250) *Voz da Fatima*, March 3, 1934, quoted by Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 275.

(251) The chapter devoted to the account of Jacinta's death, from which the passage we are going to quote is excerpted, had already appeared in 1921, in *Os episodios maravilhosos de Fatima*, and before that, in an article of the review *A Guarda* of June 5, 1920. The article was written then by Dr. Alberto Diniz da Fonseca using Dr. Formigao's notes taken shortly after the seer's death, between February and April, 1920 (cf. Alonso, *Historia da Literatura sobre Fatima*, p. 14).

(252) *Les grandes merveilles de Fatima*, French edition, p. 112-113.

(253) Read the entirety of Father Alonso's critical demonstration, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 267-301.

(254) Alonso, *ibid.*, p. 291-292.

(255) *Mensagem de Fatima*, September-October, 1971.

(256) *Eph.* Mar., 1972, p. 432-438.

(257) Mother Godinho's letter to Pope Pius XII was published in extenso in *Mensagem de Fatima* (September-October, 1971), and then by the German review *Bote von Fatima* in January, 1972.

(258) Cf. Part II, Chap. VII, «They did not want to heed My request.»

(259) Here four nations are named which the editors of the letter, publishing it before 1972, had believed it necessary to omit.

(260) Cf. also the testimony of Father Dias Coelho, *Bote von Fatima*, February 1972, p. 12.

(261) Cf. Gerald Freire, *O Segredo de Fatima*, 1978 (p. 105-108). The author, moreover, quotes from it only a few chosen excerpts, and being drawn out of their context, which takes away their whole value, they serve him – for lack of anything better! – as arguments against the traditionalists!

(262) If at the end of her testimony, when she writes her letter to Pope Pius XII, Mother Godinho no longer offers any guarantee of credibility, no doubt the same negative critical judgment cannot be passed uniformly on all her older testimony. Let us point out, however, that she was not questioned during the diocesan process of Fatima. She was only questioned later, in 1934 and 1935 (cf. Alonso, Eph. Mar., 1969, p. 307).

(263) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 165-169.

(264) Unlike Francisco, Lucy had never gone there, for up to then there had been only one school at Fatima, reserved for boys. The girls had to go to the hamlet of Boleiros, two miles away. But in 1917 a school for girls opened at Fatima. Cf. IV, p. 178, and Dom Jean-Nesmy, p. 143.

(265) II, p. 85-86.

(266) II, p. 82-83.

(267) IV, p. 135.

(268) II, p. 83.

(269) I, p. 38.

(270) II, p. 89.

(271) IV, p. 135.

(272) II, p. 89.

(273) No doubt referring to Canon Ferreira.

(274) II, p. 84.

(275) Cf., for example, the interrogation by Father Pocas, parish priest of Porto de Mos, who was finally disarmed by Jacinta's tranquil assurance. Barthal, *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 225-226.

(276) II, p. 89-90.

(277) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 290.

(278) II, p. 84.

(279) I, p. 19.

(280) II, p. 84-85.

(281) I, p. 19. This refers to Father Antonio de Oliveira Reis († 1962).

(282) I, p. 40.

(283) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 39.

(284) I, p. 38-39.

(285) Quoted by De Marchi, p. 290. On May 13, 1920, Father Cruz was at Fatima to direct the prayers of the pilgrims (Barthas, *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 239).

(286) The letter which he wrote on October 16 to the Patriarchate of Lisbon to request the appointment of a commission of inquiry clearly attests to this. As for the parochial investigation which he performed at the request of Msgr. De Lima Vidal, we shall speak about it again while recapping the history of the canonical process of Fatima.

(287) II, p. 83.

(288) II, p. 85-88.

(289) This refers to the agronomical engineer Mario Godinho; cf. Vol. I, p. 184, 351, 365.

(290) We suppose it refers to Father Antonio de Oliveira Reis († 1962), whom we have already mentioned.

(291) II, p. 87-88.

(292) Cf. De Marchi, p. 311.

(293) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 220.

(294) II, p. 88. Father Ferreira was transferred to Maceira on July 16, 1921, and then appointed parish priest of Santo Simon de Litem in 1926. He died there on January 26, 1945, after a long martyrdom caused by a facial cancer (cf. *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 223; Alonso, *Proceso diocesano*, *Eph. Mar.*, 1969, p. 281).

(295) IV, p. 151.

(296) II, p. 93.

(297) Cf. *Uma Vida*, p. 171-172.

(298) I, p. 44-45.

(299) I, p. 43.

(300) De Marchi, p. 249.

(301) II, p. 92-93.

(302) De Marchi, p. 249-250.

(303) II, p. 96.

(304) Here Sister Lucy is mistaken, since Francisco had died on April 4, 1919, and her father three and a half months later, on July 31.

(305) II, p. 97.

(306) II, p. 97.

(307) Fernando Leite, *Jacinta de Fatima*, p. 287-288 (Braga 1966). The second warning concerned Portugal.

(308) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 315.

(309) Dom Jean-Nesmy, p. 151.

(310) II, p. 97-98. On this stay of Lucy at Lisbon, and the reasons for her

departure, cf. Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 114-115.

(311) Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1969, p. 289-290.

(312) Cf. Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1972, p. 266.

(313) Father Augusto Maia († 1959).

(314) Msgr. Marques dos Santos (1892-1971).

(315) II, p. 98-99.

(316) This is the date furnished us by Sister Lucy herself in 1936, in a brief chronology of the principal events of her life undoubtedly written at her confessor's request (Doc., p. 465).

(317) De Marchi, p. 210.

(318) II, p. 99-100.

(319) II, p. 100.

(320) Canon Galamba, *Fatima Altar do Mundo*, II, p. 133. Cf. our Vol. I, p. 125-126.

(321) II, p. 100.

(322) It was in 1873 that the Sisters of Saint Dorothy – the “Dorothean Ladies”, as they say in Portugal, or even quite simply “the Dorotheans” – took charge of “Asilo de Vilar”, founded in 1840 for the education of poor young women.

The congregation of Dorotheans is of Italian origin: founded in 1834 by Saint Paula Frassinetti (1809-1882), approved by Pius IX in 1863, it was already very solidly implanted in Portugal when the anti-religious revolution of 1910 broke out. Out of twelve houses then in existence, all of them disappeared and the religious were sent into exile. Only Asilo de Vilar, because of its beneficial character, was able to subsist. The religious, in secular garb, were able to remain there as professors and directresses (cf. Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1972, p. 268).

(323) This Portuguese author had the privilege, in 1935, of questioning Sister Lucy at great length. Out of obedience and in spite of an extreme reluctance, she was obliged to confide several memories to him (cf. IV, p. 179-182). Indeed his great work *Fatima*, which appeared in 1936, was for a long time one of the principal sources for this period of Sister Lucy's life.

(324) Quoted by Alonso, *Fatima, Espana, Rusia* (=FER), p. 18-19.

(325) Alonso, FER, p. 19.

(326) A.M. Martins, *Cartas da Irma Lucia*, “cartas ineditas”, p. 98-117 (Porto, 1979). Since all the letters of this period which we quote in this chapter are drawn from this work, we shall content ourselves with indicating the date.

(327) Alonso, FER, p. 21.

(328) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 467.

(329) Cf. the letter of April 13, 1924 (*infra*, p. 225), which informs us how

this reading of mail by the superiors was also painful to Lucy's mother.

(330) Quoted by Alonso, FER, p. 15.

(331) Barthas, TPE, p. 222.

(332) Msgr. Pereira Lopes, born in 1880, died in 1969, having become vicar general of Porto.

(333) This text, conserved by Msgr. Pereira Lopes, was published for the first time by Father Martins dos Reis in 1973 in *Uma Vida*, p. 305-327.

(334) This companion of Lucy, who later became a religious, often recalled this memory. Cf. our Vol. I, p. 99-100.

(335) D. Maria Filomena Morais de Miranda (1879-1935). Since June 17, 1921, when she had presented Lucy to Asilo de Vilar, she continued to visit her. While bringing her little protégée the clothes she needed, she did not fail, as a great devotee of Our Lady of Fatima, to tell the seer about the latest news of the pilgrimage. Lucy loved her a great deal, and these rare visits were a real consolation to her.

(336) During the night of March 6, 1922, some sectarians had placed several cartons of dynamite which blew up the roof of the little chapel of the apparitions.

(337) The photograph in question shows that she greatly exaggerated a chubbiness which moreover hardly lasted.

(338) After emigrating to Brazil in 1923 where he lived in poverty, Manuel dos Santos died on April 30, 1977.

(339) TPE, p. 221.

(340) TPE, p. 228.

(341) Doc., p. 465.

(342) Doc., p. 463. While affirming that this apparition was the first one since October 13, 1917, Lucy fails to mention that of June 16, 1921, no doubt because the Blessed Virgin left her no message that day. Moreover, as is most often the case with her, she notes her recollections as they come back to her at the instant when she is writing, without the intention of being exhaustive, or any concern for chronological exactness.

(343) Barthas, TPE, p. 227.

(344) We must quote here a passage from the Memoirs, where Sister Lucy ingenuously describes this mysterious attraction she always exercised over those near to her, at Aljustrel, at Vilar, and in religious life: «There was a dear chosen portion of the Lord's flock, who showed me singular affection. These were the little children. They ran up to me, bubbling over with joy, and when they knew I was pasturing my sheep in the neighbourhood of our little village, whole groups of them used to come and spend the day with me. My mother used to say:

«I don't know what attraction you have for children! They run after you as

if they were going to a feast!”

«... *The same thing happened to me with my companions in Vilar; and I would almost venture to say that it is happening to me now with my Sisters in religion.*» (II, p. 101.)

(345) Here is what our “Doctor of the little way of spiritual childhood” declared, shortly before dying: «Théophane Vénard is a *little* saint, his life is completely ordinary. He loved the Immaculate Virgin a great deal, he loved his family a great deal... I too, greatly love my “little” family! I do not understand the saints who do not love their family...!» *Histoire d’une âme*, p. 251; Office Central de Lisieux, 1913. Cf. *Derniers Entretiens*, from May 21-26, 1897, p. 210-211; DDB, 1971.

(346) Alonso, FER, p. 21; Barthas, TPE, p. 229.

(347) They were Dr. Formigao, with whom we are very familiar, Msgr. Pereira Lopes, professor at the seminary of Porto, who, as the seer’s confessor, contented himself with performing the function of registrar, and Msgr. Marques dos Santos, professor at the seminary of Leiria.

(348) Quoted by Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1969, p. 314.

(349) Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1972, p. 270.

(350) IV, p. 158.

(351) Thus an apparition of the Child Jesus, which she surely had at Asilo de Vilar between 1923 and 1925, is known to us only by a simple allusion in a letter of October 1925 to Msgr. Pereira Lopes (*Uma Vida*, p. 329-331, and the commentary of Father Martins dos Reis, p. 333-334).

(352) On May 17, 1925.

(353) FER, p. 22. On Lucy’s vocation to Carmel, cf. our Vol. III, p. 154-156.

(354) Ibid.

(355) TPE, p. 229-230.

(356) *Cartas*, p. 113.

(357) Letter to her mother, September 20, 1925.

(358) *Cartas*, p. 115.

(359) Cf. Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1972, p. 270.

(360) Mother Monfalim, who was Provincial since 1919, remained so until her death on May 31, 1937.

(361) The letter to Msgr. Pereira Lopes was published in 1973, in *Uma Vida*, p. 329-331. The one destined for Bishop da Silva is found in *Cartas da Irma Lucia*, p. 116-117.

(362) Msgr. Pereira Lopes had been well placed to understand the temptation of his spiritual directee, since at the request of his friends, the Vicomte of S. Joao da Pesqueira and his wife, Sister Lucy had embroidered for his particular chapel

a splendid chasuble (cf. *Uma Vida*, p. 373).

(363) Allusion to an apparition of the Child Jesus, no doubt in 1924 or 1925.

(364) We combined the texts of the two letters, which complete each other on some details.

(365) In this case, the young recruit spent a year as an “aspirant”, before entering the postulancy properly speaking. For Lucy, who had already patiently waited a year at Asilo de Vilar, this new delay, which set back that much farther the happy day of her vows and reception of the habit, was a hard trial.

(366) Here the letter to Msgr. Pereira Lopes ends. The rest is taken solely from the letter to Bishop da Silva, to whom Lucy contented herself with recalling her peace and immense joy.

(367) Thus Lucy had once more, as superior, the Directress who had welcomed her to Asilo de Vilar.

(368) In conclusion, Lucy asks His Grace for the favour of being able to give her address to her mother. Prudence is still demanded, because Lucy began her religious life still incognito, under her borrowed name “Mary of Sorrows”. Even within the community, her companions were not to know that she was the Fatima seer.

(369) According to Father Martins, who was able to consult the diary of the Tuy community, it was on July 20, 1926 – and not on the 19th, as Father Gonçalves stated (Doc., p. 467), or the 16th, as Father Martins dos Reis thought – that Lucy entered the novitiate of Tuy (cf. FCM, p. 17, note 1).

(370) On June 13, 1917. Cf. our Vol. I, p. 167-169.

(371) Father Alonso points out the error of Mother Magalhaes, who was only with Lucy at Vilar for a year and three months.

(372) The person in question was D. Filomena Morais de Miranda. The interrogation she made on that occasion has been preserved for us.

(373) Cf. *supra*, the letter where Lucy herself recalls the event, p. 147.

(374) Quoted by Alonso, *Eph. Mar.*, 1973, p. 34-37.

(375) *Infra*, Chapter XII, Appendix II.

(376) The message of Pontevedra for quite a long time remained almost completely unknown, or was relegated to a position of secondary importance. The thick book by Canon Barthas, *Fatima 1917-1968*, which appeared in 1969, devoted barely two pages to it! (p. 211-212.) It was necessary to wait until 1973 to finally find all the important documents in Father Alonso’s excellent study, *Fatima and the Immaculate Heart of Mary* (MSC, p. 37-48). But nothing can replace the more complete little work which the same author published in 1974: *La Gran Promesa del Corazon de Maria en Pontevedra* (LGP). A little pamphlet gives important excerpts from this work in French: *Le message de Fatima à*

Pontevedra (translation by Father Simonin). Finally, to consult all the sources, we must go back to the Portuguese works, *Documentos* and *Uma Vida*.

(377) The text that we quote from is a second or third version identical to the first one, which has not been preserved. It was written by Sister Lucy at the end of 1927, at the request of her spiritual director, Father Aparicio, S.J. «Out of humility», the latter explains, «Sister Lucy showed some reluctance to writing in the first person, to which I responded that she could write in the third person, which she did.» Letter to Father da Fonseca, January 10, 1938, quoted by Alonso, Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 25.

(378) Doc., p. 401.

(379) Letter of 1927 in which Lucy subsequently explains to Father Aparicio how this precious manuscript was burned by her in 1927 (Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 23-24).

(380) This letter, however, constitutes an extremely important document. We will quote from it in an appendix. See Appendix II to the final chapter.

(381) This document, which continued to be in the possession of its addressee, remained totally unknown until 1973, the date it was published by Father Martins dos Reis in *Uma Vida*, p. 337-357. Cf. Doc., p. 477-481.

(382) Had Don Garcia asked Lucy not to speak to him about this apparition any more? It is possible. In this case we can understand why she no longer dares even to confide to him her interior torment on this subject.

(383) Cf. Letter to Father Gonçalves, June 12, 1930, Doc., p. 409.

(384) *Uma Vida*, p. 337-351. Later on (p. 263-264.) we will quote from the end of this letter, where Lucy explains the state of her soul to her spiritual director.

(385) Alonso, LGP, p. 45.

(386) The great promise of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Pontevedra does not fail to remind us, in a striking fashion, of the great promise of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary. But since this analogy is not the only one, we prefer to include in it the examination of a more complete parallel between the two messages of Paray-le-Monial and Fatima. In effect, the revelation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary mutually clarify and shed light on each other. We shall be able to explain this more clearly when we shall have progressed further in the explanation of the message of Fatima.

(387) Father F. Beringer, *Les indulgences, leur nature et leur usage*, Vol. I, No. 767, fourth edition, Lethielleux, 1925.

(388) July 1, 1905, *ibid.*, No. 760.

(389) *Ibid.*, No. 762.

(390) Cf. Vol. I, p. 159, 163-164.

(391) Beringer, op. cit., No. 762. The Pope granted, in addition to the plenary indulgence, the right to the apostolic blessing with the indulgence at the point of death.

(392) Cf. St. Alphonsus De Liguori, *Preparation For Death*, Twelfth Consideration, “The Importance of Salvation”.

(393) LGP, p. 75; cf. *infra*, Part II, Chapter VII, note 21.

(394) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 86-87.

(395) Doc., p. 407; cf. MSC, p. 46.

(396) Sister Lucy’s reply, received by Father Gonçalves on June 12, 1930. Doc., p. 411; cf. MSC, p. 47.

(397) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 296-298.

(398) Doc, p. 403. For this meditation one may follow Sister Lucy’s advice, *infra*, Final Chapter, Appendix III.

(399) Doc., p. 479-481.

(400) *Uma Vida*, p. 351-353.

(401) Which distinguishes it very clearly, for example, from the message of Berthe Petit, which Mother Montfalim, the Dorothean Provincial Superior, was helping to spread in Portugal at that time. Cf. Father Duffner, *Berthe Petit et la devotion au Coeur Dououreux et Immaculé de Marie*, p. 147: Mother Montfalim had known Berthe Petit in Switzerland, during the World War. (Fourth Edition, Camaldolese Benedictines, La Seyne-sur-Mer, Var.)

(402) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 303.

(403) Doc., p. 407; MSC, p. 45.

(404) On this letter, which has no date, Father Gonçalves had marked: June 12, 1930. Doc., p. 409-410; cf. MSC, p. 46-47.

(405) As in the writings of Saint Margaret Mary, it would be an error to see the expression of a real uncertainty or doubt in this restrictive formula. It is simply a formula of humility and obedience through which the seer defers in advance to her director’s judgement.

(406) We will quote the conclusion of this revelation further on.

(407) LGP, p. 56-57.

(408) *L’Homme nouveau*, March 2, 1980, p. 20.

(409) LGP, p. 56.

(410) Doc., p. 409.

(411) Sister Lucy herself suggests this comparison with Mt. 12:31-32 in her conversation with Father Fuentes.

(412) Dom Jean-Nesmy, for example, gives this inexact translation: «So many are *the sins* which the justice of God condemns for being sins committed against me...» (*Lucie raconte*, p. 208; *La Vérité de Fatima*, p. 221; cf. also Father

Alonso's translation which appeared in MSC, p. 42) No! The original text in fact says: «São tantas *as almas* que a Justiça de Deus condena por pecados contra Mim cometidos...» Doc., p. 465. Thus, without any doubt Our Lady refers to the numerous souls who are damned, not the sins which God reproves.

(413) Letter received on May 29, 1930. Doc., p. 405; cf. MSC, p. 44.

(414) See our Vol. I, p. 86-89.

(415) Letter to Father Aparicio, Doc., p. 483.

(416) Letter of June 20, 1939, to Father Aparicio, Doc., p. 485.

(417) III, p. 113. In later chapters we will relate how Lucy was to strive indefatigably to make known the reparatory devotion and get it approved by her bishop and by the Pope, according to Heaven's desires (*infra, passim*).

(418) Cf., at the end of this introduction, the appendix on the structure of the Secret.

(419) III, p. 116.

(420) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 180, 190, 303-305.

(421) Words of Our Lady to Sister Lucy in 1931.

(422) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 3-18.

(423) Cf. Angel Marvaud, *Le Portugal et ses colonies*, p. 55 (Alcan, 1912).

(424) *Fatima a prova*, p. 76. On the predominant role of Masonry in the revolutions which for two centuries have shaken the Catholic nations of Latin Europe, cf. J. Ploncard d'Assac, *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons*, p. 7-117, éd. de Chiré, 1979. Cf. also *La Franc-Maçonnerie anglo-protestante et satanique*, CRC No. 152, April 1980.

(425) Dom Ch. Poulet, *Histoire du christianisme*, fasc. XXIX-XXX, p. 346, Beauchesne 1950. Cf. Salvador de Madariaga, *Le déclin de l'Empire espagnol d'Amérique*, p. 318-320, Albin Michel 1958.

(426) Cf. Robert Ricard, *Études sur l'histoire morale et religieuse du Portugal*, p. 26.

(427) Barthas, Merv. XXs., p. 256.

(428) Cf. A. Marvaud, p. 51. We borrow the majority of information concerning this period from this author.

(429) Declaration to the Congress of Free Thought, March 26, 1911, quoted by Barthas, Merv. XXs, p. 256. At the same time in France, which revolutionary Portugal slavishly imitated, Viviani declared: »We have assigned ourselves the task of anticlericalism, a work of destruction of religion. We have snatched human consciences away from (religious) belief... Together, and with a magnificent gesture, we have extinguished in the firmament lights which will be kindled no longer...!» (Quoted by Harry Mitchell, *Pie X et la France*, p. 64-65, éd. du Cédre, 1954.) As chastisement for his presumption it was the light of his

own reason that was snuffed out. And the poor man, in his delirium, went about in his room in the clinic holding a lighted candle in his hand!

(430) Acts of H.H. Pius X, Vol. VII, p. 72-83, Bonne Presse.

(431) Cf. Dr. Ervino Elmle, *O Padre Cruz*, p. 59-69, Edições Paulistas, 1979.

(432) *Discursos*, Vol. II, p. 24. Coimbra, 1937.

(433) Alonso, *O Dr. Formigão*, p. 287.

(434) Merv. In., p. 245-246.

(435) Merv. XXs, p. 256. Costa Brochado wrote in 1948.

(436) Quoted by G. Virebeau, *Les Papes et la Franc-Maçonnerie*, p. 28, Documents et Témoignages, 1977 (H. Coston).

(437) Cf. *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 281.

(438) Cardinal Cerejeira, *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. I, p. 289.

(439) Cf. our Vol. I, p. 357-362: "The Sign of God, Triumph of the Faith".

(440) *Fatima a Luz da Historia*, p. 327 sq.; *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 247-250.

(441) Merv. XXs, p. 267.

(442) Canon Galamba was the first to publish all the documents related to the Masonic persecutions against Fatima: *Fatima a prova*, (Grafica), Leiria, 1946.

(443) Undoubtedly there was an error in one or another of the accounts of the event, because Father De Marchi gives the date of October 23 or 24.

(444) II, p. 90.

(445) De Marchi, p. 225.

(446) This text, quoted by De Marchi (p. 226-227), concluded with enthusiastic exclamations designed to strengthen the Catholics.

«Blessed be the Religion which has made our Homeland so great and glorious and which is the comfort of the immense majority of the Portuguese people, in the bitter events of individual life and in public calamities!

«Blessed be the Cross of Christ, whose image once waved triumphantly on the masts of our ships, when they went out to conquer new worlds for the Faith and for civilization!

«Blessed be the Virgin, Patroness of Portugal, who in the midst of all our misfortunes and all our trials, with maternal solicitude has always watched over the fate of our beloved Fatherland and over its immortal destiny!

«May God pardon the impious ones, uncouth men without education, who, dominated by a blind and futile rage, stupidly blaspheme His adorable Name, and may He not permit His justice to send us the terrible chastisements which public sacrileges and profanations ordinarily bring upon nations that accept such crimes!»

And, what is stupefying is that *O Seculo* agreed to publish this protest provided it was not identical to the one which the zealous defender of Fatima

sent directly to the Interior Minister. No doubt they were very similar. Cf. *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 248, 234.

(447) It is difficult to specify the exact date of this demonstration with certainty. Father Simonin places it between August 19 and September 13, 1917, «probably in the second half of August» (De Marchi, p. 159). But Canon Barthas situates it on December 2, 1917. (*Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 234.)

(448) Read the charming account of this day by Ti Marto, De Marchi, p. 160.

(449) De Marchi, p. 162-163.

(450) *Histoire du Portugal*, p. 107, Puf, 1977.

(451) In his response, dated April 29, the Pope undoubtedly made a veiled reference to the events of Fatima. He wrote: «This hope is confirmed above all by the ardent devotion of your people for the Immaculate Virgin, a devotion which so greatly ennobled this portion of Christ's flock. Such a devotion merited, in truth, an extraordinary help (*singulare quoddam auxilium*) on the part of the Mother of God.» (Merv. In., p. 248. cf. A.A.S., 1918, p. 230.)

(452) Costa Brochado, quoted by Barthas, *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 250.

(453) Collective Pastoral Letter of the Portuguese bishops, Easter 1938. Cardinal Cerejeira, *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. I, p. 142-144.

(454) Father Denis, O.P., Professor of Theology at the convent of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima. Quoted by G. Renault, *Fatima*, p. 218 (Plon, 1957).

(455) Op. cit. p. 220.

(456) De Marchi, p. 230-231.

(457) Cf. our Vol. I p. 240-242.

(458) De Marchi, p. 233.

(459) De Marchi, p. 233-234.

(460) De Marchi, p. 235-237. What date must be assigned to this construction? According to Barthas, April 18, 1919 (*Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 184); according to Dom Jean-Nesmy “at the end of 1919” (*La Vérité de Fatima*, p. 152); De Marchi remains imprecise.

In fact, a text of the parish priest, Father Ferreira, dated August 6, 1918, indicates to us that the work began at that time. It was an erroneous interpretation of this document, sent to the patriarchate on April 18, 1919, that provoked the confusion (cf. Martins dos Reis, “*Sintese*”, *Apêndice Documental fotográfico*; Francisco Pereira de Oliveira, *Para a historia da urbanização da Cova da Iria*, p. 14-15 & 22, in *Fatima 50*, February 13, 1970. Cf. also: P.H. Netter, *Fatima Chronik*, p. 24; Leiria, 1970).

(461) De Marchi, p. 299; cf. *Novos Documentos* by Father Martins, p. XIV-XV.

(462) Cf. the interesting article by Msgr. Antunes Borges: “A primeira

imagem de Nossa Senhora de Fatima. De como, quando e por quem foi feita” (*Fatima* 50, Nov. 13, 1968, p. 49). Let us point out that we owe the first and most beautiful statue of Our Lady of Fatima, showing Her Immaculate Heart surrounded by thorns, to the same sculptor, José Ferreira Thedim. This was offered to the Carmel of Coimbra shortly after Sister Lucy entered there, on Holy Thursday of 1948 (cf. Antunes Borges, “Como surgiu a primeira imagem do Imaculado Coração de Maria”, *Fatima* 50, March 13, 1969, p. 14).

(463) Barthas, *Fatima 1917-1958*, p. 237.

(464) This was Father Antonio de Oliveira Reis; he spoke with Lucy several times and since then was completely won over to the cause of the apparitions (cf. *supra*, p. 187-194). Although Canon Barthas says so in several places (p. 185, 237), the statue was not enthroned at the Capelinha on the morning of May 13; we will see why. The testimonies of Canon Formigao and Maria Carreira concur: that day it remained at the sacristy of the parish church. In effect, the persecution had started up again and it was impossible to proceed to this solemn installation.

(465) Read in De Marchi – to savour their style! – some of these administrative dispatches exchanged then, to «neutralize this politico-jesuitical filthiness» and to resist «the ignoble reactionary superstition».

(466) De Marchi, p. 301.

(467) *Os episodios maravilhosos de Fatima*, June 1921, quoted by De Marchi, p. 302-306.

(468) II, p. 90-92.

(469) Letter of June 5, 1920, addressed to the above-mentioned federation, De Marchi, p. 307.

(470) Finally, discouraged by his repeated failures, Artur de Oliveira Santos was to quit his post as Administrator for good, in the beginning of 1921. He died at Lisbon in 1955.

(471) De Marchi, p. 308-309.

(472) His name is so intimately connected with Fatima, whose bishop he was to be for thirty-seven years, that it is indispensable to evoke at least the broad outlines of his biography: born on January 15, 1872, in the diocese of Porto, he did his secondary studies in a college at Braga directed by French Holy Ghost Fathers. Then he pursued his theological studies at the seminary of Porto (1889-1892) and the University of Coimbra (1892-1897). From 1897 on, he taught Church History, the biblical sciences and theology at the seminary of Porto. A great sacred orator, he also occupied himself with Catholic social works. A chaplain at the Catholic Circle, he was a contributor to the journals *A palavra* and *A Liberdade*. At the time of the 1910 revolution, he was arrested five times, and kept in prison a total of eight months in a humid place. As a result of this sad

stay in jail, he had certain infirmities all his life. Finally, in 1920, he was designated Bishop of Leiria, a diocese restored on January 17, 1918, by the brief *Quo Vehementius* of Benedict XV. (Cf. Barthas, *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 256; Alonso, Eph. Mar., 1969, p. 279 & 289.)

(473) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 257-258.

(474) Cf. *supra* p. 205.

(475) *Ibid.*, p. 206, sq.

(476) Cf. *Fatima 50*, February 13, 1970, p. 14-24. This article of Father Pereira de Oliveira retraces the detailed history of the acquisition of the present domain of the sanctuary. Its esplanade alone is more vast than St. Peter's square.

(477) Pastoral Letter of May 3, 1922.

(478) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 187.

(479) Cf. *Fatima 50*, July 13, 1970, p. 22.

(480) De Marchi, p. 312.

(481) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 241.

(482) *Ibid.*, p. 242-243.

(483) De Marchi, p. 309.

(484) *La Voz da Fatima* still appears, but its circulation has decreased.

(485) *Les grandes merveilles de Fatima*, p. 128-129.

(486) P. 314. In 1927, a new well was discovered. But the Cova da Iria was being transformed little by little into an urban agglomeration, so the wells no longer sufficed. It was necessary to build conduits carrying water from Vila Nova de Ourem.

(487) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 244-246.

(488) In 1918, the parish priest of Santa Catarina and Msgr. Sabino Pereira, parish priest of Holy Saviour at Santarem, testified to this extraordinary phenomenon (*Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 151-152). For the significance of this sign, cf. our Vol. I, p. 266-267.

(489) Another association reserved for women was approved in 1926. Later on, the two associations merged under the title, «Pious Union of Servites of Our Lady of Fatima», comprising four sections: priest chaplains, doctors, servite stretcher-bearers, and servite nurses. Their first president was Dr. Carlos Mendes, a witness from the very first hour, whom we have already mentioned. See Vol. I, p. 247-251.

(490) Read on this subject the excellent clarification made by the authorities of the sanctuary: «The basilica, the hospital and the buildings adjoining the Cova da Iria were constructed solely with the voluntary gifts of the pilgrims, without any national or international collection, and without any participation of the Portuguese State.» (Quoted by Dom Jean-Nesmy, p. 245-246, note 3.)

(491) Rome, February 11, 1967 (D.C., March 19, 1967, col. 547).

(492) Cf. the excellent article by M.L. Lède: “Comment Salazar fut appelé au pouvoir.” *Écrits de Paris*, Sept. 1967, p. 66.

(493) “Notre-Dame dans la piété populaire portugaise”, p. 630. In *Maria, Études sur la Vierge Marie*, Vol. IV, Beauchesne, 1956.

(494) Quoted by Jacques Ploncard d’Assac, *Salazar*, p. 44. Dominique Martin Morin, 1983 (First Edition, La Table Ronde, 1967).

(495) Father José de Oliveira Dias, op. cit., p. 630.

(496) Op. cit., p. 52.

(497) *Les Dictateurs*, p. 262, Denoel, 1935.

(498) Cf. Paul Sérant, *Salazar et son temps*, p. 39. Éd. “Les sept couleurs”, 1961.

(499) Whether one consults Father da Fonseca, Canon Galamba, Father Castelbranco, Costa Brochado, Father Martins dos Reis, or many others, right up to Father Alonso, all are in agreement on this point.

It is sad to see how good Canon Barthas in later editions, so as not to arouse the prejudices of his French readership, felt obliged to water down more and more his praise of Salazar’s work, which was inseparable from the great Portuguese religious renewal. As for Dom Jean-Nesmy, he completely passes over in silence this political aspect of the event of Fatima.

(500) Ploncard d’Assac, *Salazar*, p. 20.

(501) Having become Patriarch of Lisbon, the latter described the beginning of their long, unfailing friendship in this way: «We knew each other from the School of Law when, having already been ordained a priest (since 1911), I took my theology courses at the same time. But Salazar and myself, united by a paternal friendship, had decided to live “en république”, as we used to say here, meaning in community, sharing the household expenses between us. We lived together from 1915 to 1928 at Rua dos Grilos, in an old palace dating back to Pombal’s time. Maria did the cooking for us.» (J. Ploncard d’Assac, p. 30.)

(502) Concerning the CADC, see the note by Metzner Leone in *Fatima, os testemunhos*, by Barthas, Aster 1965.

(503) Louis Mégevand, *Le vrai Salazar*, p. 72-73 and 190. NEL, 1958.

(504) The figures can be consulted, for example in Mégevand, op. cit., p. 74-80.

(505) Ploncard d’Assac, *Salazar*, p. 64-65. Second Edition Dominique Martin Morin, 1980. First Edition, La Table Ronde, 1967.

(506) A photograph can be seen at Fatima, in the museum of the vice-postulation, depicting General Carmona coming out of the new hospital in the company of Bishop da Silva.

(507) For a long time, the events at the Cova da Iria left him indifferent and sceptical. On this point we have the invaluable testimony of Dr. Lisboa, in his report on the final days of Jacinta's death. He relates the following very significant anecdote:

«The very day of Jacinta's funeral, there was a General Assembly of conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul, at which I had to be present. At the following Assembly, I felt bound to justify my absence from the preceding Assembly by saying that a work of mercy had prevented me from being present, and I explained that I had had to take care of the funeral of one of the Fatima seers. This declaration provoked an almost unanimous burst of laughter from those who were present, including, naturally, important figures from Catholic circles in the patriarchate.

«His Eminence the Cardinal Patriarch, Dom Antonio Mendes Belo, who was presiding over the Assembly, joined in this burst of laughter... It is true that later on His Eminence declared to me his admiration for Fatima, and he told me of his desire not to die before being able to celebrate Mass at the altar of the Basilica being built at the Cova da Iria.» (Quoted by De Marchi, p. 289-290.)

The old Cardinal died on August 4, 1929, at the age of eighty-seven, before having the opportunity to manifest publicly his conversion to the cause of Fatima.

(508) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 179.

(509) On these visits by bishops, see *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 262-263 and De Marchi, p. 316-317.

(510) Since May 12, 1964, a shorter and more frequented Way of the Cross, the stations of which were offered by Hungarian exiles, furrows the picturesque hill separating the Cova da Iria from Aljustrel. This is "the sacred way of Cardinal Mindszenty", with a monumental calvary and a chapel dedicated to Saint Stephen, King of Hungary, at its twelfth station.

(511) Quoted by Barthas, *Merv. In.*, p. 312-315.

(512) Rolim, Francisco, *Florinhas de Fatima*, p. 427, Third Edition, 1947; cf. Pio XI e Fatima, by P. Cristino in *Voz da Fatima*, March 1985, p. 1-2.

(513) *Ét. An.*, p. 27-28. Barthas adds that on March 25, 1931, Bishop Frutuoso went to Fatima accompanied by all his seminarians, and he was the first bishop to celebrate Mass there pontifically.

(514) H. Netter, S.V.D., *Fatima Chronik*, p. 34. Cf. *Merv. In.*, p. 105.

(515) Cf. Rolim, *Francisco*, p. 428.

(516) Letter of Canon Barthas to Father Alonso, June 1, 1967, quoted in *Eph. Mar.*, 1969, p. 298. Cf. Castelbranco, p. 130.

(517) The text of the pastoral letter is found almost in its entirety in

Documentos, p. 517-522.

(518) «1. An indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines to all the faithful each time that, contrite for their faults, they visit the sanctuary of Fatima and pray there for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff;

«2. A plenary indulgence once a month – on the usual conditions – to pilgrims in a group who pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

«Earlier, the Holy Father had granted 300 days indulgence to the invocation: “*Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, pray for us.*”» Cf. Rolim, p. 429.

(519) In effect, Father Cerejeira, who since 1919 was Professor of History at Coimbra, had been appointed auxiliary Bishop of Lisbon on March 23, 1928. On November 18 he had been chosen as patriarch to succeed Cardinal Mendes Belo. (cf. Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 46.)

A man of exceptional calibre, the young bishop, named a Cardinal on December 16, 1929, quickly became the undisputed spiritual guide of the entire Portuguese episcopate. Suspicious and reserved at first, he soon became the ardent propagator of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. In addition, being a spiritual son of Father Mateo Crawley since the missionary’s first sojourn in Portugal in 1927-1928, the Cardinal was very devoted to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to which he had consecrated his diocese on June 1, 1930. (Cf. Father Marcel Bocquet, *Père Mateo, apôtre mondial du Sacré Coeur*, p. 165. Téqui 1963; and Cardinal Cerejeira, *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. 1, p. 287.)

From now on, each within his own sphere and in the most scrupulous distinction of powers – to the point of reducing their meetings to a minimum so as to manifest this independence – the two friends from Coimbra, Salazar and Cerejeira, who were both called to the highest offices in 1928 and accepted them on the advice of Father Mateo – were to be for forty years the providential artisans of Portugal’s religious and national renaissance.

(520) FER, p. 31 and 93.

(521) «There was no direct or indirect intervention of Lucy in this», the Cardinal declared later on (preface to FDM, of Canon Barthas, p. 9).

(522) Cf. above, p. 256-259.

(523) Let us point out that it was Father Mateo who was behind the national consecration to the Sacred Heart. He requested this of the bishops after his stay in Portugal from November 1927 to July 1928. (Cf. Father Marcel Bocquet, *Père Mateo*, p. 164-167.)

In the collection of his sermons entitled *Jesus, the King of Love*, published in 1928, he expressed his ardent desire to see the Pope consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. During the retreat he preached to the Portuguese

bishops in January of 1931, he could only encourage them to accomplish the consecration of their country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We know that he remained in Portugal until August 1931, but his biographer doesn't tell us whether he came to Fatima for the great pilgrimage of May 13.

(524) *Voz da Fatima*, No. 104; Merv. In., p. 305.

(525) FER, p. 93.

(526) *Obras Pastorais*, Vol, I, p. 289-292. Excerpts can be found in Merv. In., p. 305-306.

(527) Cf. supra, p. 358-359.

(528) The text of this Provisao is quoted by Barthas, Merv. In., p. 301-303.

(529) "Fatima, Proceso Diocesano, Estudios y Textos criticos", Eph. Mar. 1969, p. 279-340, All the quotations in our exposition are excerpted from this long study, which they sum up. Let us point out that Father Kondor has begun the publication of this critical study in his bulletin, *Les voyantes de Fatima*, (January-April and May-August, 1983).

(530) Michel Agnellet, in *Miracles à Fatima*, describes at length the inquiry conducted by Canon Formigao in September, 1918, p. 125-133. Éd de Trévisé, 1958. John Haffert reports another case of healing which took place on this same October 13, 1917 (cf. *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 359).

(531) Agnellet, op. cit., p. 116-117. Cf. *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 297-301.

(532) P. 171-175.

(533) Dr. Mendes do Carmo, *Uniao Grafica*, Lisbon, 1945.

(534) Agnellet, p. 203. For the analysis of the case, p. 122 and 197-204.

(535) Proceso Diocesano, Eph. Mar., 1969, p. 334.

(536) This is so true that one may fruitfully consult the expositions of Barthas, Merv. In., p. 211-230; of Father G. da Fonseca, *Nossa Senhora de Fatima*, p. 229-264. Cf. also the testimony of José Alves (quoted above, p. 356-357) and Maria da Capelinha, De Marchi, p. 309-310.

(537) Merv. In., p. 326.

(538) Preface to *Fatima et les destins du monde*, by Canon Barthas, p. 7-8.

(539) Cf. preface to *Jacinta*, *Obras pastorais*, Vol. II, p. 330-331; cf. also the preface to *Fatima*, by G. Renault, p. IX. Read also the moving accounts in Merv. In., p. 231-242.

(540) Cf. Father Serafim Leite, S.J., article "Portugal" in the Dict. de théol. cath., col. 2616.

(541) These two series of figures can be found in the two successive editions of Canon Barthas' work: Merv. XXs, p. 16 and *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 21.

(542) *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 283.

(543) Collective Pastoral Letter for the Jubilee of the apparitions in 1942,

Merv. XXs, p. 338.

(544) Merv. XXs, p 261.

(545) Ibid., p. 338.

(546) Radio message of October 31, 1942, De Marchi, p. 320.

(547) Gazette de Liège, September 9, 1948, quoted by Ploncard d'Assac, p. 227. Cf. also *L'Ordre Français*, September-October, 1970, p. 11.

(548) The expression “national revolution”, used by Salazar, should not fool us. If he retained this expression in spite of its ambiguity, it is because he got it from the generals who had saved the country by the *coup d'état* of May 28, 1926. But he was able, on that occasion, to clarify the sense in which it must be understood, that of a revolution against “the established disorder”: «If I am a revolutionary, it is to the extent that I am... for truth against imposture, for order against disorder, to which this country was only too accustomed.» (Quoted by H. Massis, *Chefs*, p. 112, Plon, 1939.)

(549) In 1936, for the tenth anniversary of the liberating coup of May 28, Salazar drew up a balance sheet of the work accomplished. This text, which is fifty pages long, is remarkably rich. It surely constitutes the best summary of his program. It was published in French under the title: *Comment on relève un État*. Flammarion, 1936. We will quote from it under the abbreviation, CRE.

(550) CRE, p.21.

(551) Ibid., p.29.

(552) Ibid., p. 17.

(553) Ibid., p. 19.

(554) Ibid., p. 17.

(555) Ibid., p. 30.

(556) Cf. Léon de Poncins, *Le Portugal renaît*, Beauchesne 1936, and by the same author: *Histoire secrète de la Révolution espagnole*, p. 121-123, Beauchesne 1938.

(557) Ploncard d'Assac, p. 150. One of the first decisions of the revolutionaries of 1974, would be to return this building to the Freemasons, who have installed themselves there once more. It is always the same implacable struggle which continues!

(558) *Lettre sur le Sillon* No. 11, CRC 47, August 1971.

(559) CRE, p. 45.

(560) Henri Massis, *Chefs*, p. 112 & 99.

(561) I Tim. 2:2.

(562) April 15, 1937. Quoted by Ploncard d'Assac, p. 142.

(563) One must read the admirable discourse for the commemoration of the victory of Aljubarrota, which Salazar ordered to be read in all the schools of the

country on August 14, 1935. *Le Portugal et la crise européenne*, p. 512, Flammarion, 1940.

(564) No. 44, CRC 47, August 1971.

(565) Although the monarchy had become liberal and Masonic, Catholicism still juridically continued to be the State religion, and relations between the two powers were governed by concordats. The result was disastrous. Granted, the State subsidized worship, but on the other hand it interfered with the Church in a scandalous manner. «At that era», Salazar writes, «the Church was united to the State by golden chains»! The religious decadence continued to be accelerated in a serious manner. Salazar, *Principes d'Action*, p. 69. Fayard, 1956; cf. Ploncard d'Assac, p. 176 sq.

(566) The text of the Concordat and the missionary Accord which completes it is quoted in the *Documents pontificaux de S.S. Pie XII*, Vol. II, p. 151-168, Saint Augustin publishers. (Saint-Maurice, Switzerland.)

(567) Cf. Anne-Marie Azam-Lafont, *La Liberté religieuse au Portugal*, p. 147, 181, 186, Doctoral thesis, October 1976, University of Toulouse.

(568) Radiophonic discourse of October 31, 1942.

(569) Cf. Alonso, FER, p. 92.

(570) Excerpts of the pastoral letter of the Portuguese bishops, Easter 1938. Cardinal Cerejeira, *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. II, p. 141-142.

(571) Ploncard d'Assac, *Salazar*, p. 137-138.

(572) Collective pastoral letter of Easter 1938, *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. II. p. 142.

(573) Ploncard d'Assac, op. cit., p. 142-143.

(574) *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. II, p. 144.

(575) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 142-143.

(576) Here let us quote the testimony of Cardinal Cerejeira, who repeated on many occasions that he had held in his hands Lucy's letter which had been passed on to him by Bishop da Silva: «I saw the letter in which seven months before the war, this “horrible, horrible” war, which would cover the earth and the sea with blood, was announced as imminent, but where it was promised that Portugal would be spared these horrors because of the consecration which Portugal's bishops had made to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.» May 30, 1948 (Merv. XXs. p. 343). Cf. in 1955, FDM, p. 10; in 1956, VND, p. 209; in 1967, D.C., March 19, 1967, p. 552.

(577) Doc., p. 427.

(578) Doc., p. 437-439. Cf. the first version of this letter, October 24, 1940, the text of which is practically identical on this point, Doc., p. 433.

(579) We follow the work of Claude Martin, *Franco soldat et chef d'État*, p.

300 sq. Éd. Quatre fils Aymon, 1959.

(580) Ibid., p. 307.

(581) Father Herman Netter, S.V.D., *Fatima Chronik*, p. 43-44. Grafica de Leiria, 1970.

(582) An article of a Portuguese historian, Joao Vitoria, brings this point to light quite well: “Nossa Senhora de Fatima preservou Portugal da guerra 1939-1945”. *Fatima* 50, No. 18, October 1968, p. 10, sq.

(583) Alonso, FER, p. 100. In Chapter XI we will quote from the letter which Sister Lucy wrote to Cardinal Cerejeira for this intention, December 1, 1940. Doc., p. 435, 495.

(584) May 13, 1946, De Marchi, p. 329.

(585) Wisdom which must be stressed in the face of calumnies from the *a priori* hostile, and from ignorance: «It is an astonishing dictatorship where a victorious Generalissimo, a great strategist, capable of conquering even Gibraltar or Tangier, refuses to throw his country into the adventure and resists the solicitations of successive conquerors although accompanied by wonderful promises – to end up finally without a catastrophe, in contrast with almost all the others.» Abbé G. de Nantes, CRC 105, May 1976, “La dictature catholique de Franco”, p. 11.

(586) In a later chapter we will describe the messages from Heaven passed on to the Spanish bishops by Sister Lucy.

(587) Collective pastoral letter for May 13, 1942, jubilee of the apparitions. Merv. XXs., p. 337. Cardinal Cerejeira often affirmed this miracle of peace; *ibid.*, p. 342. Cf. VND, p. 209.

(588) *Discursos*, Vol. IV, p. 95 and 98. Ploncard d’Assac, p. 206-207.

(589) Cf. Castelbranco, p. 173-174.

(590) Ibid., p. 174.

(591) Cardinal Cerejeira, preface to *Jacinta*, (1942), *Obras Pastorais*, Vol. II, p. 333. Cf. also his homily of May 13, 1942, Merv. XXs., p. 339.

(592) Cf. Father Giuseppe M. Schweigl, S.J., *Fatima e la conversione della Russia*, p. 15 sq. Pontificio Collegio Russico, Rome, 1956. And above all, G. Cerbelaud Salagnac, *Fatima et notre temps*, France-Empire, 1967.

(593) Cf. *L’erreur de l’Occident*, Livre de Poche, 1980.

(594) “L’Église face aux dictatures. La dictature bolshevique”, CRC 105, May 1976, p. 6.

(595) Abbé Georges de Nantes, CRC 184, Dec. 1982, p. 21. Cf. Msgr. Jean Rupp, *Héros chrétiens de l’Est, hommage au déporté Kolbe*, p. 137 sq., Lethielleux, 1972.

(596) Michel Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich, *L’utopie au pouvoir. Histoire de*

l'URSS de 1917 à nos jours, p. 27. Calmann-Lévy, 1982.

(597) *Ibid.*, p. 26.

(598) Henry Coston, *Ces millions de morts dont on ne parle plus*, Lectures françaises, April 1980.

(599) Heller and Nekrich, p. 113.

(600) CRC 184, p. 5.

(601) Gilliard, *Le tragique destin de Nicolas II et de sa famille, Treize années à la cour de Russie*, Payot, 1922.

(602) CRC 184, p. 22.

(603) Jean Ousset, *Le Marxisme-Léninisme*, p. 344. La Cité Catholique, 1960.

(604) Cf. Heller and Nekrich, p. 55-56.

(605) Quoted by Coston, Lectures françaises, p. 5.

(606) Quoted by Father Michel d'Herbigny, S.J., *La tyrannie soviétique et le malheur russe*, p. 237, Spes, 1923. Cf. Jean Ousset, *Le Marxisme-Léninisme*, p. 345.

(607) Heller and Nekrich, p. 114.

(608) *Ibid.*, p. 117.

(609) *La tyrannie soviétique*, p. 50-51.

(610) Ulysses Floridi, S.J., *Moscow and the Vatican*, p. 16, Ardis 1986.

(611) Quoted by Coston, p. 5.

(612) *La Gazette*, September 1918, quoted by Coston, *ibid.*

(613) D'Herbigny, p. 99-100.

(614) Here our exposition is based solely on the facts furnished by Heller and Nekrich, who cannot be suspected of embellishing the facts or exaggerating the figures. The preceding quotations are taken entirely from this work, p. 183-201.

(615) V.A. Kravchenko, *J'ai choisi la liberté. La vie publique et privée d'un haut fonctionnaire soviétique*, éd. Self, 640 pages, 1947.

(616) Abbé G. de Nantes, "The bolshevik dictatorship", CRC 105, May 1976, p. 5.

(617) P. 197.

(618) Lenin, *Sur la grande révolution socialiste d'Octobre, 1917-1977*, p. 15 and 34, Novosti, Moscow, 1977.

(619) Cf. *supra*, Part I, Chap. VI.

(620) Letter to Sister Lucy, May 9, 1929, *Uma Vida*, p. 365. Also must reading is the moving account of a miraculous healing obtained by the seer at this period (cf. *infra*, Chap. XII, Appendix IV).

(621) In God's great design, the reparatory devotion and the consecration of Russia are so intimately connected with each other, that resuming our account of

events, after 1925, in the next chapter we will examine the Church's response to these two requests of Our Lady.

(622) Doc., p. 463-465. This text, which is the most detailed one we have, was written by Sister Lucy in May 1936, when her spiritual director, Father Gonçalves, asked her to write some biographical notes. *Documentos* does not give us a reproduction of the original manuscript, which was destroyed by Sister Lucy, but reproduces a literal copy which Father Gonçalves made at the end of April 1941, during the course of a visit to Sister Lucy.

Unfortunately, the translations of this text appearing in MSC (p. 41) and in an appendix to the Memoirs of Sister Lucy are faulty on several points. Thus the reader need not be astonished at any discrepancies he may notice.

A second, more succinct account of the vision of Tuy may be found *infra*, Chap. VII, Appendix.

(623) We know that Father José Bernardo Gonçalves, who was superior of the Jesuit community at Tuy, heard Sister Lucy's confession for the first time on May 19, 1929, thus hardly a month before the apparition (Doc., p. 399).

(624) Letter received by Father Gonçalves on May 29, 1930 (Doc., p. 405). The letter of next June 12, addressed to the same person, literally employs the same formula (Doc., p. 411), which indissociably unites the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

(625) Fourth Lateran Council: «*Absque initio, semper ac sine fine: Pater generans, Filius nascens, et Spiritus Sanctus procedens*» (Denz., 428).

(626) Council of Florence (Denz., 691).

(627) CRC 184, Dec. 1982, p. 16 & 18. This wonderful history of mystical and Christian Russia, from Saint Vladimir to Saint Seraphim of Sarov and the "Way of a Pilgrim" in the entire nineteenth century, is related with much charm in two works available to all: Pierre Kovalevsky, *Saint Serge* (collection *Maîtres de la vie spirituelle*, Seuil 1958); and John Meyendorff who relates the continuation in *Saint Grégoire Palamas* (same collection).

(628) Doc., p. 413.

(629) Abbé de Nantes, *Way of the Cross*, "Prayer to the God of Pity".

(630) Cf. Vol. I, p. 76, 88, 104-105.

(631) Matins Antiphon for the Feast of the Holy Trinity. 2 Cor. 13:13: «*Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et caritas Dei, et communicatio Spiritus Sancti sit cum omnibus vobis.*»

(632) Saint Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904.

(633) Mass of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces and Mass of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

(634) Ven. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*.

(635) Ez. 47:1-12; Jn. 19:34; Apoc. 22:1.

(636) See our Vol. I, p. 112.

(637) Abbé Georges de Nantes, *Way of the Cross*, 1974.

(638) See for example A. Feuillet, *Jésus et sa Mère*, the spiritual maternity of Mary, p. 135-139. In the light of «the woman who gives birth» of Apocalypse 12, the author gives Jesus' words, «Woman, behold Thy son», all their richness of affirmation of a permanent mystical reality, merited by the Cross but already pre-existing in fact, like the grace of the Immaculate Conception: «The dying Christ sees Mary and the beloved disciple, and *He* says something which nobody sees and nobody knows: that Mary is the Mother of the disciple and the disciple His son. What does this mean, if not that this episode does not relate the creation of something new, but simply reveals a reality that already exists.» (p. 138) Cf. also the very developed exposition of M. Braun, «La Mère des fidèles»: *La Mère du disciple*, p. 97-129 and *La Femme de l'Apocalypse*, p. 131-176, Casterman, 1953.

(639) Cf. *supra*, p.265 and etc.

(640) Letter of May 9, 1929, to Sister Luz (*Uma Vida*, p. 365). The letter of July 24, 1927, addressed to her mother, and entirely devoted to the devotion of the five first Saturdays, is even more significant: «A devotion... which our dear Heavenly Mother has requested», «our dear Mother», «our most Holy Mother with Jesus on Calvary», «the tenderest of mothers», «in this way console your Heavenly Mother, and seek to make many others console Her in the same way» (cf. *supra*, p. 261-262.). She could hardly be more insistent on Mary's *Maternal Heart*.

(641) *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904.

(642) «If God were your Father, you would love me, for from God I proceed and came... But you seek to kill me... You are of your father, the devil.» Jn. 8:39-44.

(643) Letter to Father Gonçalves, May 18, 1936. Doc., p. 414.

(644) Cf. *supra*, p. 427-428.

(645) Let us remark that it is in this very spirit that the Portuguese bishops made the consecration of their country in 1931. We will also have the opportunity to cite eloquent historical examples which illustrate the incomparable supernatural fecundity of such a consecration: the consecration of France to Our Lady by King Louis XIII in 1638, the parish of Our Lady of Victories consecrated on December 3, 1836, to the «Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary» by Father des Genettes; or finally the parish of Ars, consecrated by its holy parish priest that same year, 1836, to Mary conceived without sin.

(646) We have already explained this important aspect of the message at

length, cf. Vol. I, p. 86-89 and *supra*, in the chapter on “The Great Promise”, p. 153 etc., “The Reparatory Devotion, a Secret of Mercy for Sinners”.

(647) Cf. *supra*, Part I, Chapter VII, note 36.

(648) To such a point that, relating the Divine request for the consecration of Russia, Sister Lucy sometimes speaks of a «*consecration of Russia to the most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary*», which is necessarily addressed at the same time to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is how true it is that «... to come to the Heart of Mary is to come to Jesus; to honour the Heart of Mary is to honour Jesus, to invoke the Heart of Mary is to invoke Jesus...» Saint John Eudes, *Le Coeur Admirable*, Vol. II, chap. V. Cf. Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*, No. 148.

(649) *L'erreur de l'Occident*, p. 89, 1980.

(650) MSC, p. 48.

(651) “El Corazon Immaculado de Maria, alma del mensaje de Fatima.”

(652) René Laurentin, “Le Secret de Fatima”, *Historia*, May 1982, p. 48.

(653) Cf. *supra*, p. 246-254.

(654) Alonso, Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 37.

(655) Cf. Declaration to Father Jongen, De Marchi, p. 346.

(656) FCM, p. 17.

(657) De Marchi, p. 346.

(658) Born in 1879, in 1912 he was ordained priest in the Society of Jesus. In 1938, he was sent to the missions in Brazil. He died on May 21, 1966 (FCM, p. 17).

(659) We have already quoted the whole continuation of this letter, cf. *supra*, p. 261-262.

(660) Cf. *infra*, chap. XII, appendix III.

(661) *Uma Vida*, p. 361-362. Father Martins dos Reis mistakenly dates this letter Christmas, 1926 (cf. FCM, p. 23).

(662) Alonso, Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 27.

(663) Doc., p. 401.

(664) *Ibid.* Regarding the gradual revelation of the Secret, in the final analysis we rally to Father Alonso’s hypothesis which seems the most probable one. In his most recent studies, he interprets Lucy’s declarations to Father Jongen in a restrictive sense (cf. De Marchi, p. 343-344). The Fatima expert thinks that in 1927 Lucy wrote only the themes of the Secret related to the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, without yet speaking of Russia or the Second World War.

As for the later declarations of Father Aparicio, affirming that he was informed of the request for the consecration of Russia, and even the world, from

the years 1926-1927, Father Alonso thinks it is impossible to take them literally. Cf. on this subject the study of A.M. Martins: “O Padre Aparicio e a consecração da Rússia et do mundo ao Immaculado Coração de Maria”, *Broteria*, 1967, p. 746-755. And Father Alonso’s response in *Eph. Mar.*, 1973, p. 66-71.

This does not change the fact that on December 17, 1927, Lucy in fact received Heaven’s authorization to reveal the first two parts of the Secret. If she did not do so at this moment, it was only as she said to Father Jongen, «because nobody asked me to». De Marchi, p. 344. Cf. Alonso, MSC, p. 40, and the Fourth Memoir, where we see Father Aparicio encourage the seer not to reveal the Secret to Dr. Fischer in 1928 (p. 158-159).

(665) According to Father Martins, Father Aparicio resided at Tuy only until July 24, 1927 (FCM, p. 17).

(666) «At the beginning of 1928 (Father Aparicio recalls) I sent the copy of the document to the Bishop of Leiria; he answered me that at this moment the bishops were busy promoting throughout Portugal the Communion of Reparation on the 13th of each month; they would deal with this devotion later.» (Letter of June 17, 1936, FCM, p. 34.)

(667) *Eph. Mar.*, 1973, p. 28-29.

(668) *Cartas*, p. 117.

(669) Cf. *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 210, note 8.

(670) Here follows the text of the great promise such as we have already quoted it (*supra*, p. 247). Let us note only a clarification regarding confession, which must be accomplished «with the same purpose of making reparation for offences against the Most Holy Virgin».

(671) Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 117-119, 293-295. Letter to Madre Cecilia.

(672) *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 118-119.

(673) *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 294.

(674) *Eph. Mar.*, 1973, p. 51-52. In a letter of October 20, 1928, Lucy is still insistent with Bishop da Silva (*ibid.*, p. 53).

(675) *Ibid.*, p. 73 and FER, p. 28.

(676) *Eph. Mar.*, 1973, p. 71-72; cf. FER, p. 29.

(677) *Ibid.*, p. 72.

(678) *Ibid.*, p. 72.

(679) PCM, p. 31.

(680) *Eph. Mar.*, 1973, p. 73.

(681) Doc., p. 405. Translation in MSC, p. 43-44.

(682) Doc., p. 407; MSC, p. 45-46.

(683) Doc., p. 409; MSC, p. 46-47. We quote from the original text. The

subtitles are our own.

(684) Doc., p. 409; MSC, p. 46-47.

(685) FAE. p. 96. In an appendix we shall quote the text of these two important letters (cf. *infra*, Chap. XII, Appendix V).

(686) Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 41.

(687) Cf. *infra*, p. 739-740.

(688) De Marchi, p. 346. These two texts clearly assume an intervention by Father Gonçalves, before that of Bishop da Silva in 1937. Without which, Sister Lucy would say that her bishop was passing on Our Lady's requests to the Pope. Now she gives the highest prominence to the role of Father Gonçalves, even in the second version of her letter to Pope Pius XII, reviewed and corrected by Bishop da Silva himself (December 2, 1940, Doc., p. 437. Cf. in the same sense, her response to William Thomas Walsh, *infra* Chap. XII, Appendix V).

In her response to Father Jongen, Sister Lucy added: «I also made known Our Lady's requests to my superiors, to the Reverend Mother Provincial, Mother Eugenia de Sousa Montfalim, who died in 1937, and to the Reverend Mother Mistress, Mother Maria de Penha Lemes, presently at Vila Nova de Gaia (Porto), where she exercises the office of secretary of the Reverend Mother Provincial. Mother Maria do Carmo Corte Real.» (De Marchi, p. 346.)

(689) Cf. *supra*, p. 386-387.

(690) *Annum Sacrum*, Acts of Leo XIII, Vol. VI, p. 27, Bonne Presse. Let us add that Pope Pius XI, in *Quas Primas*, cited this whole passage which affirms the universal royalty of Christ.

(691) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

(692) Maria Droste zu Vischering, of German origin, had become in 1894 Superior of the Monastery of the Good Shepherd, at Porto. She passed on to the Pope the message of the Sacred Heart in two letters, dated June 10, 1898, and January 6, 1899. She was beatified by Pope Paul VI on November 1, 1975. (cf. Louis Chasles, *Soeur Marie du Divin Coeur*, Beauchesne, 1905.)

(693) On this point, which we cannot develop here, cf. for example Father J. Arragain (Eudist), "La Dévotion au Coeur de Marie", in *Maria Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, Vol. V.

(694) Father G. Geenen, "Les antécédents doctrinaux et historiques de la consécration du monde au Coeur Immaculé de Marie", *Maria, Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, p. 863-867.

(695) *Jésus, Roi d'Amour*, p. 379, Secrétariat intern. de l'Intronisation, Paris, 1930.

(696) 300 days, Fr. Beringer, *Les indulgences, leur nature et leur usage*, supplement, p. 36, Lethielleux, 1932.

(697) Ibid., p. 36.

(698) Written in his own hand, February 2, 1930, *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. VI, p. 148-151 (Bonne Presse, 1934).

(699) Ibid., p. 223-224. On the origin of these prayers see *L'Ami du Clergé*, October 16, 1930, p. 657.

(700) Unless the Tuy revelation was communicated to him earlier than we think. And in this case the Mass of expiation on March 19, 1930, would have been an initial, incomplete response to the message of Fatima. But with the information currently available to us, there is no evidence to support this hypothesis.

(701) G. Geenen, op. cit., p. 867.

(702) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. VII.

(703) Declaration to Father Jongen.

(704) Alonso, FER, p. 95.

(705) Alonso, *Fatima Ante la Esfinge*, p. 97.

(706) Doc., p. 413.

(707) Doc., p. 465. Cf. *supra*, p. 464-465.

(708) «In 1931, from Rianjo, where by order of my Superiors I had gone to rest for a month, I wrote a letter to His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria, insisting on this same request, and there I mentioned the words of Our Lord: “*Like the King of France, they do not heed My requests; the Holy Father will consecrate Russia, but it will be late.*”» (De Marchi, p. 347.)

(709) In a conversation with a member of her family, on August 11, 1982. Cf. Fr. Caillon, *La Consécration de la Russie aux très Saints Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie*, p. 45, Téqui, 1983.

(710) Certain historians, arguing from the absence of any contemporary document attesting that the king was in fact informed, thought quite simply that he never found out about it. The words of Our Lord to Sister Lucy settle the debate definitively. The king finally found out about the requests but «he did not want to heed them» and «he delayed their execution».

(711) Letter 100. *Vie et oeuvres de sainte Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, Vol. II, p. 437-438, Gigord, 1920.

(712) Letter 107, to Mother de Saumaise, *ibid.*, p. 456-457.

(713) Father T. Rey-Mermet, *Le Saint du siècle des Lumières*, p. 573. Nouvelle Cité, 1982.

(714) Added for the second edition (October, 1986).

(715) Sister Lucy, whose memory otherwise is excellent, herself admits that she never paid attention to dates. The apparition took place on the 13th and not the 11th of June.

- (716) FCM. p. 78-79.
- (717) Cited below, p. 462-465.
- (718) History of the Church, *A Fight for God*, (1870-1939), Doubleday, 1966, p. 324.
- (719) Cf. Father Ulysses Floridi, S.J., *Moscow and the Vatican*, Ardis, p. 16.
- (720) Floridi, op. cit., p. 16.
- (721) André Saint-Denis, *Pie XI contre les idoles, Bolchévisme, racisme, étatismisme*, p. 34. Plon, 1939.
- (722) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. I, p. 36, Bonne Presse.
- (723) Public letter to Cardinal Gasparri, *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. I, p. 45-46.
- (724) Letter to Cardinal Pompili, February 2, 1930, *Actes*. Vol. VI, p. 148.
- Cf. also Floridi, p. 18....
- (725) Cf. Floridi, p. 16-17; Saint-Denis, p. 29-31; d'Herbigny, *La Tyrannie soviétique et le malheur russe*, p. 239-241 (Spes, 1923).
- (726) Heller and Nekrich, p. 114, cf. *supra*, p. 450-452.
- (727) D'Herbigny, p. 249.
- (728) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. I, p. 73-76.
- (729) Floridi, p. 19.
- (730) Paul Lesourd, *Entre Rome et Moscou, le Jésuite clandestin*, Mgr. d'Herbigny, p. 42, Lethielleux, 1976.
- (731) *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- (732) «Our voyage was facilitated (É. Herriot relates)... by Mr. Chicherin who was quite willing to give the orders necessary to avoid all problems and put at our disposal a young attaché of his commissariat, Mr. Schestakovski...»
- (733) P. 5 and 297. Éd. Ferenczi, Paris, 1922.
- (734) Lesourd, p. 44.
- (735) *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- (736) *Ibid.*
- (737) The following year, the Soviets were to obtain far more than a death sentence: the Patriarch Tikhon made a public declaration of total submission to the Bolshevik regime. Thus he was granted semi-liberty and continued to benefit from the personal aid of the Holy Father until his death on April 7, 1925. (Cf. Saint-Denis, p. 31.)
- (738) Cf. the letter *Decessor Noster*, combining the Oriental Institute with the Biblical Institute and confiding it to the Jesuits. (*Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. I, p. 107.)
- (739) *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 132 and 138.
- (740) *La Tyrannie soviétique*, p. 35.
- (741) *L'erreur de l'Occident*, p. 11-12; cf. p. 36-37.

(742) *La Guerre occulte*, p. 204 (in collaboration with Leon de Poncins), Beauchesne, 1936.

(743) Abbé G. de Nantes, "Russia before and after 1983", CRC 184, p. 22.

(744) P. 41 and 50.

(745) D'Herbigny, p. 52.

(746) Ibid., p. 56.

(747) Ibid., p. 24.

(748) P. 228.

(749) D'Herbigny, p. 232-233.

(750) The most complete account of this persecution of 1923 is given by Georges Goyau, *Dieu chez les Soviets*, Chap. V, (The tragic Holy Thursday of a Catholic Bishop), p. 61-71. Flammarion, 1929.

(751) D. Rops, *A Fight for God*, p. 326.

(752) Floridi, p. 20.

(753) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. I, p. 225-228.

(754) Floridi, p. 17.

(755) Father d'Herbigny's biographer assures us that he wrote it, Lesourd, p. 51.

(756) *Actes*, Vol. I, p. 291-307. Cf. also the discourse in the Consistory, always in the same sense, December 20, 1923, p. 309-310.

(757) Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State, was in favour of maximum concessions towards the Soviets.

(758) Floridi, p. 19-21.

(759) *Actes*, Vol. II, p. 164-165.

(760) Moreover, H. Stehle reveals to us that three weeks later Pius XI gave the Nuncio, Pacelli, new instructions for his contacts with the Soviet Embassy at Berlin!

(761) As d'Herbigny himself explained in 1923 (*La Tyrannie soviétique*, p. 162-167).

(762) For the account of this voyage we follow Father Lesourd, p. 53-61.

(763) Ibid., p. 54, quoting Father d'Herbigny.

(764) Cf. *supra*, p. 455.

(765) It must be noted that it was precisely the same men - Aristide Briand, who after April, 1925, was practically a fixture as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Protestant, Berthelot, his secretary-general, and the modernist and left-wing Christian Canet, as fierce an adversary of Maurras as of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Pius X - who on the one hand organized Bishop d'Herbigny's journeys to Russia, and on the other hand obtained from Rome at the same time, the condemnation of *Action Française*. Cf. Nicolas Fontaine (alias Canet), *Saint*

Siège, Action Française et Catholiques integraux, ed. Gambien, Paris, 1928; Lucien Thomas, *l'Action Française devant l'Église de Pie X à Pie XII*, p 106 sq., N.E.L., Paris, 1965. Cf. also the communication of M. Satou to the Charles Maurras colloquium in 1976, and CRC 108 p 9.

(766) Lesourd, p. 54.

(767) Ibid., p. 58.

(768) P. Lesourd, p. 59.

(769) Ibid., p. 62.

(770) P. 63.

(771) Lesourd, p. 64-66.

(772) Ibid., p. 69.

(773) Cf. p. 116.

(774) Ibid., p. 94.

(775) Ibid., p. 95.

(776) Ibid., p. 95.

(777) P. 104.

(778) Ibid., p.105.

(779) Cf. Floridi, p. 21. These attempts were pursued from 1925 to 1927.

(780) Lesourd, p. 124-125.

(781) Private admission to several Cardinals before the conclave of 1939, reported in Cardinal Verdier's private notes. Cf. Papin, *Le dernier étage du Vatican, témoignage de Pie XI à Paul VI*, p. 29, Albatros, 1977.

(782) Floridi, p. 21.

(783) Lesourd, p. 106.

(784) Ibid., p. 87, 96.

(785) p. 144.

(786) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. VI, p. 7-13.

(787) *Actes*, Vol. VI, p. 8.

(788) Cf. Saint-Denis, p. 37-38.

(789) 64 pages and 72 pages, éd. Spes.

(790) Cf. the apostolic letter *Paterna sane sollicitudo* of February 2, 1926 where the Pope protested against «the iniquity of the condition imposed on the Church in Mexico», also the encyclical *Iniquis Afflictisque* of November 18, 1926, where Pius XI, approving the firm attitude adopted by the bishops, practically encouraged the uprising as the only solution, faced with an intolerable tyranny of a base minority persecuting religion, in a country with a unanimously Catholic population. (*Actes de S.S. Pie XI*. Vol. III, p. 131 and 260.)

Also must reading is the solid historical study by Jean Meyer, which was the first to break the conspiracy of silence maintained on this subject since 1926:

Apocalypse et Révolution au Mexique, La Guerre des Cristeros, 1926-1929, éd. Archives Gallimand-Julliard, 1974.

(791) P. 27.

(792) Cf. Jean Meyer, p. 161-224. Read also the encyclical *Acerba animi* of September 29, 1932, Acts, Vol. VIII, p. 94-113.

(793) Cf. *supra*, p. 538-540.

(794) Thus *L'Ami du Clergé* contented itself with devoting six lines to it in its edition of April 17, 1930, p. 242.

(795) Floridi, p. 15.

(796) Lesourd, p. 146-147.

(797) Ibid.

(798) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. VI, p. 157.

(799) On the sad end of Pius XI's Ostpolitik, cf. *infra.*, p. 617-619.

(800) Dominique Martin Morin, March 1986, 214 pages.

(801) Desclée and Brouwer, 1987, 650 pages.

(802) The German version appeared in 1975. It was translated into English and appeared in 1981, under the title: *Eastern Politics of the Vatican 1917-1979*, 466 pages, Ohio University Press. We refer to this edition.

(803) P. 116-124 and 382-392, *Le Centurion*, July 1982, 1008 pages.

(804) Letter 107, to Mother de Saumaise, August 28, 1689. *Vie et oeuvres de Sainte Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, Vol. II, p. 458; Gigord, 1920.

(805) Robert Brasillach and Maurice Bardèche, *Histoire de la guerre d'Espagne*, p. 19; Plon 1939.

(806) D. Rops, *A Fight for God*, p. 330. Cf. Paul Lesourd, *Pie XI*, p. 45, Flammarion, 1939; Charles Ledré, *Un siècle sous la tiare, de Pie IX à Pie XII, les successeurs de Pierre face au monde moderne*, p. 148, Amiot-Dumont, 1955.

(807) Aguirre Prado, *L'Église et la guerre civile espagnole*, p. 31. Service informatif espagnol, 1964.

(808) Léon de Poncins, *Histoire secrète de la révolution espagnole*, p. 35-36; Beauchesne, 1938.

(809) Collective letter of July 1, 1937; *ibid.*, p. 188.

(810) These few excerpts of letters are quoted by Alonso, *Fatima, Espana, Russia*, p. 95-96.

(811) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. X, p. 16-37.

(812) Quoted by Brasillach, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

(813) Heller and Nekrich, p. 631.

(814) May 3, 1932, *Actes*, Vol. VIII, p. 33-61.

(815) *Ex officiosis litteris*, *Actes*, Vol. X, p. 172-183.

(816) *Francisco*, p. 431-432.

(817) *Fatima Chronik*, p. 37-39. Cf. the letter of June 24, 1936, naming Cardinal Cerejeira pontifical legate for the sixth centenary of Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, where the Pope makes no allusion to the political and religious situation in Portugal, or to Fatima. *Actes*, Vol. XIV, p. 67-70.

(818) “Le point sur le drama de Mgr. d’Herbigny”, *Le Figaro*, June 14, 1977.

(819) Cf. the testimony of Canon Papin, *Le dernier étage du Vatican*, p. 45.

(820) J. Vandrisse, *Le Figaro*, *ibid.*

(821) Cf. the *Motu proprio* of December 21, 1934, *Actes*, Vol. XII, p. 244.

(822) Paul Lesourd’s work, which we have quoted so often, is a goldmine of useful information. But it is an apologia which, to the extent it tends to completely vindicate Bishop d’Herbigny, remains unconvincing. To whitewash his hero, the author more or less finds himself forced to charge with grave injustice all his superiors, all the successive investigators of the Society of Jesus, Cardinal Sincero, the members of the Curia and Cardinal Pacelli himself. This is a bit much... The severe judgment of J. Vandrisse, which reflects the judgment of the Jesuit authorities, in the final analysis seems more objective. He writes: «Bishop d’Herbigny had multiplied his imprudent acts and errors of judgment, and committed abuses of power... The trial (of sanctions) was terrible for the religious. It aggravated his penchant for mythomania which disturbed his entourage since 1934... The autobiographical journal of 1956 gives rather disturbing proofs of an accentuated imbalance...» He died at Aix-en-Provence in 1957.

(823) Barthas, TPE, p. 235-236.

(824) Letter of October 28, 1934. *Documentos*, p. 411. Fortunately, a new opportunity soon presented itself when Lucy could insist with her bishop in favour of the consecration of Russia.

(825) She remained at Pontevedra from October 9, 1934 until May 27, 1937.

(826) Brasillach, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

(827) Léon de Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 57-61.

(828) We add to this text some subtitles which underscore the principal ideas.

(829) Sister Lucy undoubtedly insists here on the difference between supernatural inspiration, the divine word felt from within, and the word which is heard with the senses in an external apparition.

(830) *Doc.*, p. 413.

(831) *Maria, Études sur la Vierge Marie*, p. 868.

(832) *Documentos*, p. 413.

(833) FCM, p. 33.

(834) Fourth Memoir, p. 179-182.

(835) Cf. the appendix at the end of the chapter.

(836) Léon de Poncins, *Histoire secrète de la révolution espagnole*, p. 74 sq.

(837) D. Rops, *A Fight for God*, p. 322.

(838) Quoted by Léon de Poncins, op. cit., p. 174.

(839) Ibid., p. 193-194.

(840) Ibid., p. 175-176, 202.

(841) Ibid., p. 135-167. This admirable discourse recorded by Léon de Poncins very much deserves to be read.

(842) Quoted by Brasillach, *Histoire de la guerre d'Espagne*, p. 49.

(843) It is remarkable that at this moment, at the beginning of May 1936, Lucy wrote the most complete account of the vision of Tuy (cf. *supra*, p. 462-464.).

(844) Let us repeat once more that these moments of doubt, frequent among the souls of mystics favoured with great graces, are easily comprehensible: how could our seer, who was so profoundly humble and distrustful of herself, not be afraid of being mistaken, when for seven years neither her bishop, in whom she had full confidence, nor the Pope had deigned to pay attention to the message she passed on to them? And these terrible and so laconic words, which say more than many discourses – «The Holy Father! Pray a great deal for the Holy Father!» – how could she not hesitate to make them known? And yet, she continues, she was afraid of committing a sin by hiding these divine revelations... This is why she resolved to speak.

(845) Such interior dispositions, which a fabricator would never have had the idea of expressing, far from being bewildering, are for the informed theologian a sure mark of authenticity. In addition there are the extraordinary miracles of 1917, which give a universal guarantee of the authenticity of her testimony. Moreover, neither Father Gonçalves nor Bishop da Silva were fooled by them, being able to recognize in these painful fears of illusion the marks of a sincere humility or a supernatural trial, making more meritorious for her the communication of secrets revealed by Heaven.

(846) Doc., p. 413-415. Letter of May 18, 1936.

(847) Saint Bernadette experienced similar feelings: she often said with anguish, «*I have received so many graces, and I am afraid of not having corresponded to them.*» And her night was at times so dark, that she even came to doubt the apparitions: «*I do not like speaking about them... If I were mistaken...*», she said one day to Msgr. Bourret. Laurentin, *Bernadette vous parle*, Vol. II, p. 389 and 408, Lethielleux, 1972.

(848) Doc., p. 417. Convinced of the supernatural origin of the request for the consecration of Russia, Father Gonçalves consulted Father Moran, a holy Jesuit, who «judged that it was very fitting *to insist with Rome*». Father

Gonçalves then wrote in this sense to Bishop da Silva on September 29, 1936, then again on January 24, 1937 (cf. *infra*, Chapter XII, Appendix VI).

(849) *Uma Vida*, p. 368.

(850) Brasillach, op. cit, p. 14.

(851) To be sure, by July 13 the uprising had already been decided on. But the assassination of Calvo Sotelo was the signal for it to be unleashed: Arnaud Imatz writes, «This news not only accelerated the preparations and led to the day and hour being fixed definitively, but it also moved certain sectors of the population who were still hesitant about participating in the military project. In this regard, all testimonies agree.» *Jose Antonio et la Phalange espagnole*, p. 205. Éd. Albatros, 1981.

(852) Report to the committee of non-intervention, Léon de Poncins, op. cit., p. 178.

(853) Ibid., p. 104.

(854) Interview of General Franco in *Diario de Noticias*, December 31, 1936. Quoted by Léon de Poncins, op. cit, p. 118.

(855) Ibid., p. 119.

(856) Discourse at the inaugural ceremony of the international exposition of the Catholic press at Vatican City, *Actes*, Vol. XIV, p. 29-41.

(857) *Actes*, Vol. XIV, p. 116-135. For anyone who reads attentively the pontifical acts of this period, many indications show that Cardinal Pacelli's influence was undoubtedly decisive in the clear change of the orientation of Vatican policy, manifested by the much firmer condemnations of communism, and the immediate and constant support given to the nationalist dictatorship of General Franco.

(858) This pastoral letter of November 23, 1936, is a masterly text, where the Cardinal Primate of Spain is unafraid to go back to the true causes of the revolutionary torment, both distant and immediate: «Forgetfulness of our traditions and our history», the infatuation with the ideals of 1789, Freemasonry and its impious legislation, «the fraud of parliamentarianism and the lies of suffrage», «the proselytism of Moscow, aided by the current of gold flowing unceasingly into Spain, producing the treason of the leaders and the perversion of the masses», etc. Each of these points, he explained, «would be a chapter of the “book of our decadence”». Quoted by Aguirre Prado, *L'Église et la guerre d'Espagne*, p. 19-20, and Jean Ousset, *Le Marxisme-Léninisme*, p. 394. The Cardinal published two other important documents on January 10 and 30, 1937 (Aguirre Prado, p. 21-25).

(859) December 24, 1936, *Actes*, Vol. XIV, p. 190.

(860) FER, p. 36.

(861) Quoted by Alonso without indicating the recipient, FER, p. 36-37.

(862) Cf. *infra*, Chapter XII, Appendix VI.

(863) Doc., p. 522.

(864) MSC, p. 50.

(865) Nos. 57 to 59. *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. XV, p. 81-84.

(866) On the atrocities committed at Madrid, read Brasillach, *Histoire de la guerre d'Espagne*, "La terreur à Madrid", p. 168-179. «In one month (July-August 1936), (writes English historian Hugh Thomas), close to one hundred thousand people (for all of Spain) were killed arbitrarily and without a trial.»

(867) «Everybody is familiar with the photographs of the scenes of July 20, 1936, at Barcelona: the Christ shot at, the Child Jesus disguised as a militiaman, and above all the cadavers of the disinterred Carmelites, exposed in their coffins at the gate of their convent.» (Brasillach, *op. cit.*, p. 190).

(868) The letter of the Spanish bishops is quoted *in extenso* by Léon de Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 184-220, and Aguirre Prado, p. 27-51.

(869) Aguirre Prado, p. 27. Estimates for victims of the Bolshevik terror throughout the whole war are about five hundred thousand.

(870) It was signed by forty-one bishops and five vicars capitular. Let us point out, however, that Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop of Tarragona, «leader of the episcopate» at the time of the rallying of the Republic imposed by Rome, as well as the Bishop of Victoria, refused to sign this text which, by approving without reservations «the national movement», was in effect contrary to the religious policy followed from 1931 to 1935. Cf. *Nouvelle histoire de l'Église*, Vol. V, p. 614, Seuil 1975.

(871) *Franco, soldat et chef d'État*, p. 270, éd. Quatre fils Aymon, Paris 1959.

(872) Claude Martin, *Franco*, p. 271-272.

(873) Alonso, FER, p. 37. S. Martins dos Reis indicates May 27 as the date of Lucy's arrival at Tuy (*A vidente de Fatima dialoga*, p. 52).

(874) Cf. the appendix at the end of this chapter.

(875) *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, Vol. XVI, p. 86-98.

(876) Cf. *supra*, p. 155-156.

(877) «It is with tears in our eyes that we see this relic, which merited for us so many graces from Heaven, for myself and my dear ones, leave our vault...! If it were permitted me, I would dare to beg Your Excellency to deign to put off the transfer until completion of the basilica, so as to be able to bring them directly into this temple.» Letter to Bishop da Silva (quoted by Barthas, TPE, p. 205).

(878) Cf. De Marchi, p. 292.

(879) Quoted by Alonso, *Fatima, Espana, Russia*, p. 33-34.

(880) First Memoir, p. 46. In May 1938, in the first edition of his wonderful little work *Jacinta*, Canon José Galamba de Oliveira already published the essential passages of this Memoir.

(881) *Documentos*, p. 456-467.

(882) II, p. 50.

(883) Sister Lucy's Memoirs, p. 48.

(884) II, p. 100.

(885) *Le Nouvelliste de Lyon*, January 26, 1938. Even the great journals of religious or political news, such as *La Croix* or *L'Action française*, wrote long accounts of the event.

(886) We quote here all the prophecies of the chastisement which in the text of the Secret are not interrupted by the expression of requests and promises. Cf. *supra*, p. 112 and p. 293-294, the remarks on the structure of the Secret.

(887) *O Segredo de Fatima*, p. 24.

(888) Third Memoir, p. 115.

(889) De Marchi, p. 344.

(890) *L'aurore boréale du 25-26 janvier 1938*; p. 43-68; p. 113-125; p. 306-310.

(891) The correspondent of the *Times* telegraphed Lisbon: «The simple people have interpreted the phenomenon as a supernatural sign, and they felt lively alarm because of it.» In Austria, «they believe it means war.» The aurora was visible also in Poland. Cf. Canon Barthas, *Fatima, merveille inouïe*, p. 338.

(892) Let us point out, all the same, that it is perhaps necessary to go back to the year 1726 to find, in the annals of history, a phenomenon of comparable intensity, duration, and size. Cf. Pierre Fontenailles, *Une aurore boréale en Orléanais (October 19, 1726)*. (Rép. du Centre, April 20, 1951.)

(893) *La Politique de Charles Maurras, 1926-1927*, Vol. I, p. 203-204. Bibliothèque des oeuvres politiques, 1928.

(894) Here there is a resemblance with the evening of October 24, 1870: while the Prussians were approaching Nevers, from seven to nine o'clock in the evening, Mother Eléonore Cassagnes relates that «a strange phenomenon took place in the sky. The whole horizon was in a blaze. One might have called it a sea of blood». According to witnesses, Saint Bernadette was heard to murmur, no doubt thinking of sinners, of the chastisements they had drawn down upon France, of which this aurora seemed to her the sign: «*And still, they will not be converted.*» (Cf. Laurentin, *Bernadette vous parle*, Vol. II, p. 130-131, Lethielleux, 1972; Msgr. Trochu, *Sainte Bernadette*, p. 427. Vitte, 1958.) A few months later came defeat, and soon “the Commune” with its bloody killings.

(895) De Marchi, p. 344.

(896) III, p. 115.

(897) Alonso, *O Dr. Formigao*, p. 295-296.

(898) III, p. 114.

(899) Father Joseph de Sainte Marie, OCD. *Réflexions sur un acte de consécration: Fatima, 13 mai 1982*, Marianum 1982, p. 111.

(900) Quoted by Roger Rebut, *Les messages de la Vierge Marie*, p. 210, Téqui, 1968.

(901) Cf. Don Umberto Maria Pasquale, “*Resterò nel museo del mondo a ricordare la misericordia di Dio*”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, May 12, 1982. Don Pasquale (a Salesian), who was the director of Alexandrina from 1944 until her death, was moreover in contact with Sister Lucy by letter since 1939, and he preserved in his archives 157 letters from her, as yet unpublished.

(902) Cf. *supra*, p. 388 sq.

(903) Doc., p. 523.

(904) Allocution of February 11, 1967, Doc. cath., 1967, col. 553. We quoted earlier on (p. 428, note 40) the references to the Cardinal’s previous testimony. On this letter of February 6, 1939, cf. equally Barthas (VDN, p. 177) which quotes a parallel version: «In an inner communication, Our Lord made known to me that the moment of grace, of which He had spoken to me in May 1938, was going to end. The war, with all the horrors that accompany it, will begin soon... The war will end when the justice of God shall be appeased.» (cf. Father Netter, *Fatima Chronik*, p. 39.)

(905) Or perhaps in May, because Father Gonçalves, who retranscribed this text, wrote “May” in the title. Cf. FCM, p. 39.

(906) *Documentos*, p. 465.

(907) Doc., p. 483. We shall describe, in an appendix to this chapter, how Father Aparicio used all his zeal to assist Sister Lucy in making the reparatory devotion known and approved (*infra*, p. 708-711).

(908) Sister Lucy herself underlined these last two words; Doc., p. 484-485. We know that Father Aparicio was so impressed by this letter that he read it to all the members of the community (FCM, p. 39).

(909) This text is quoted by Father da Fonseca, “Fatima e a critica”, p. 530, *Broteria*, May 1951.

(910) Unfortunately, Sister Lucy’s letters to Father Gonçalves were not published for the period of June 1936 to January 1940. Cf. Doc., p. 417-419.

(911) *Documentos*, p. 485-489.

(912) Cf. Vol. I, p. 407-408.

(913) Father Martindale, *What Happened at Fatima*, p. 15, London Catholic Truth Society.

(914) Michel de Mauny, “Les communistes et l’excitation à la guerre”, p. 136 in *Les causes cachées de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*, Lectures Françaises, May 1975.

(915) A. Rossi, *Les communistes français pendant la drôle de guerre*, p. 112. For proof that this luminous interpretation of Stalin’s policy does not rest on the author’s prejudices but on documents gradually brought to light, it suffices to compare this 1951 work (Paris, Iles d’or) with the one written by the same author in 1942, *Physiologie du parti communiste français*, p. 351 (written during the war, it was published without change by Self, in 1948).

(916) General G.W. Krivitzky, agent of Stalin, quoted by Rossi, p. 12.

(917) *L’Utopie au pouvoir*, p. 258-259; 270-285.

(918) Ibid., p. 270.

(919) Cf. Rossi, *Les communistes français pendant la drôle de guerre*, p. 79.

(920) Vol. I, Chap, V, “Germany and the Soviet Union, November 1937 - July 1938”, p. 448-473; and Vol. IV, Chap. VI, “Germany and the Soviet Union, October 3, 1938 - March 13, 1939”, p. 546-580, Plon, 1950 and 1953.

(921) Ibid., p. 284.

(922) This plan of consummate cynicism, and for which the millions of lives sacrificed did not count, was explained by Stalin practically in 1925 (Heller and Nekrich, p. 258).

(923) Quoted by Ploncard d’Assac, *Salazar*, p. 165-166. D. Martin Morin, 1983.

(924) *What happened at Fatima*, p. 15.

(925) Doc., p. 431.

(926) Ibid., p. 437.

(927) De Marchi, p. 346.

(928) France-Empire, 1979. A curious detail: on the cover, the title is printed on the background of a painting evoking... a sky in an aurora borealis.

(929) Sorlot, March 1939.

(930) Op. cit., p. 12.

(931) P. Gaxotte, *Histoire de l’Allemagne*, Vol. II, p. 496, Flammarion, 1963.

(932) Cf. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of January 31, 1939, quoted by Gabriel Louis-Jaray, op. cit., p. 12.

(933) Maria Winowska, *Le secret de Maximilien Kolbe*, p. 149-150, Saint-Paul, 1971.

(934) In his biography of Pope Pius XI, Paul Lesourd writes: «Once his decision was made, he hardly admitted contradiction and objections; he even got violently carried away if anyone insisted in a sense contrary to his own. There was a time during his pontificate when his collaborators trembled before him, he

was so authoritarian and personal. Being kept abreast of very few things, many of his intimates learned of news only when it was official.» (*Pie XI*, p. 57-58, Flammarion, 1939). Canon Papin for his part relates: «For nine years Cardinal Pacelli was to be Pius XI's most intimate collaborator. Thus there was a daily meeting. Often, the Cardinal listened to the Pope's violent reactions, with the latter's fist banging on the table. Very gently, he would try to calm him down, but after certain sessions, as we know through Mother Pasqualina, he went back down exhausted...» (*Le dernier étage du Vatican*, p. 43).

(935) On the policy of Pope Pius XI, which we bring up here only in its broad outlines, cf. Jacques Marteaux, *L'Église de France devant la Révolution marxiste*, Vol. I, La Table Ronde, 1958; Georges Champeaux, *La croisade des démocraties*, Vol. II, Chap. VII, Inter-France, 1943.

(936) Before he died, Pius XI wanted to launch a solemn condemnation of Mussolini's Fascism, in the presence of all the Italian bishops, convoked at Rome for February 11. «Make me live until February 12», he said to his doctor. But God called him to Himself on the 10th, and Pius XII wisely refrained from publishing the too violent and useless indictment (Papin, p. 37 sq.).

(937) Jean Dufay, professor at the faculty of sciences at Lyon, was at that period one of the specialists in spectrographic observation of auroras.

(938) *Le Nouvelliste de Lyon*, January 26, 1938. The same astronomer published in *La Croix* of January 27, 1938, a similar declaration: «What characterizes this real magnetic aurora is the red colour of its luminous emissions, which come from different spectral compositions of oxygen and nitrogen rays. Usually, magnetic auroras are connected with a solar phenomenon, and in particular to an eruption of the solar chromosphere. An aurora such as this is usually in connection with the passage of a spot on the central meridian of the sun. Now this time no spectral spot was found on the sun for several days. Another cause will have to be looked into.»

(939) Accounts of the sessions of the Academy of Sciences, Vol. 206, p. 357, session of January 31, 1938. Let us however indicate that the specialists point out some auroras which were visible at equally low altitudes, or even lower: at Honolulu in 1859, at Bombay in 1872, at Singapore in 1909, at Samoa in 1921. And, after January 25, 1938, in Greece in 1950, and on three occasions in Mexico in 1957 and 1958.

(940) Year 1938, p. 51; cf. from the same author, the article published in *L'Illustration* of February 5, 1938: "L'aurore boréale des 25-26 janvier", p. 144-145.

(941) Professor Dufay does not allude to the still visible spot on the solar disc of January 24. It would be astonishing if his observatory had not observed it,

when that of Juvisy had photographed it very easily (*Bulletin de la Société astronomique*, p. 49-50). Is it necessary to incriminate the imprecision of the accounts in *Nouvelliste* and *La Croix*? It is quite possible.

(942) Albert Ducrocq, “Aurores à la carte”, *Air et Cosmos*, May 14, 1983, p. 45-46.

(943) André Boischot, *Le Soleil et la Terre*, p. 75, PUF.

(944) *Encyclopaedia universalis*, 1969, p. 806-808.

(945) Albert Ducrocq, op. cit., p. 45.

(946) Added during the second edition (October 1986).

(947) FCM, p. 35-41.

(948) Letter of Father Aparicio to Father da Fonseca, August 10, 1939.

(949) Father Martins makes it clear that the imprimatur bears the date of July 16, 1939, and was confirmed on August 12 by the Archbishop of Fortaleza. It concerned a tract of eight pages which included, along with explanations of the reparatory devotion, an act of honourable amendment to the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be recited on the first Saturday of each month (FCM, p. 37, note 1).

(950) *Documents pontificaux de S.S. Pie XII*, 1951, p. 246-249. Ed. de l’oeuvre de Saint-Augustin (Saint-Maurice, Switzerland) and Labergerie (Paris), Barthas, *Fatima 1917-1968*, p. 268.

(951) *Fatima*, p. 197.

(952) Quoted by Alonso, FER, p. 40.

(953) Doc., p. 489-490. Cf. FCM, p. 72-73.

(954) Let us point out, however, that on September 21 and on October 10, 1939 Bishop da Silva had granted the imprimatur to images presenting briefly the reparatory devotion. Msgr. Pereira Lopes, Vicar General of Porto, did the same on October 23. Finally, in 1940, there appeared the fifth edition of the “Manual of the Fatima pilgrim”, containing a good summary of the reparatory devotion, invested with the imprimatur of Bishop da Silva, dated May 13, 1939 (FCM, p. 41-46).

(955) FAE, p. 119.

(956) A little further on, in the same letter, Sister Lucy writes: «My superiors like to keep me in ignorance of what is going on, and I am happy; I have no curiosity. *When Our Lord wants me to know something, He will take care of making it known to me.* For that, He has so many means!»

(957) Cf. *supra*, p. 543-546.

(958) Doc., p. 419-421.

(959) In 1970, before the appearance of *Documentos*, Father Netter, in *Fatima Chronik* (p. 40), quotes for the date of February 21, 1940 a letter which Sister Lucy is supposed to have sent *Father Aparicio*, and which strangely

resembles the text we have just read, sent on *January* 21, 1940 to Father Gonçalves. However, it has several omissions or significant corrections which indicate to us that it concerns a watered-down text, published at a period when it was preferred to keep quiet about the exact request for the *consecration of Russia*, in favour of the sole request, which came later on, for the *consecration of the world*. When questioned on this subject, Father Antonio Maria Martins answered me that there was no letter of Sister Lucy to Father Aparicio dated February 21, 1940. (Letter to the author, November 28, 1984.)

(960) De Marchi, p. 347.

(961) Doc., p. 421.

(962) Ibid., p. 425.

(963) Doc., p. 423.

(964) Doc., p. 423-424.

(965) Cf. the letter of August 31, 1941, where Sister Lucy writes: «I believe you are already in Zambesia, and I would like to know how your trip went...» (Doc., p. 445.)

(966) Sister Lucy writes somewhat haphazardly. But this expression, which in itself is awkward, is immediately explained by the following sentences.

(967) Doc., p. 425-427. Curiously, Canon Barthas, who quotes the essential passage of this letter of *August* 18, 1940 to Father Gonçalves, presents it as having been addressed to Father Aparicio on *October* 18, 1940. Once more it is a question of a false reference (VND, p. 177-178).

(968) Doc., p. 491-495.

(969) Cf. *infra*, p. 470. Pius XII answered Bishop Costa Nunes: «We receive many requests from mystics, we shall examine the matter.»

(970) On July 3, 1940, Msgr. Vilar, superior of the Portuguese College of Rome, wrote to Alexandrina: «At the beginning of last June, somebody spoke to the Holy Father about the consecration of *the world* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.» (P.M. Pinho, op. cit., p. 103.)

(971) Chaplain of the college at Vilar at the period when Lucy was there (cf. *supra*, p. 228-229), Father Manuel Ferreira da Silva was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Goa, then recalled back to Portugal to become superior of the Portuguese Foreign Missions, with the title of Bishop of Gurza. He was finally appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Lisbon, with the title of Archbishop of Cizico.

(972) Doc., p. 429.

(973) III, p. 107.

(974) Doc., p. 467.

(975) MSC, p. 58.

(976) Letter of October 27, 1940, Doc., p. 429.

(977) Father Gonçalves undoubtedly hoped that the Pope would take advantage of the solemnity of December 8 to accomplish the act requested. Once again, Sister Lucy corrects him.

(978) Letter to Father Gonçalves, October 27, 1940, Doc., p. 429. Canon Barthas, who quotes a brief excerpt from this letter, erroneously presents it as being addressed to Bishop da Silva (VND, p. 177).

(979) MSC, p. 53.

(980) Letter to Father Gonçalves, December 1, 1940.

(981) Doc., p. 495.

(982) Ibid., p. 439.

(983) In 1967, Canon Barthas published long excerpts of this letter to the Pope, but unfortunately without making this distinction. Failing to mention Bishop da Silva's corrections, he presents as only one text excerpts which come at times from the first version and other times from the second, along with the detailed account of the vision of Tuy (quoted above, p. 462-465) inserted – one wonders why – as an integral part of the letter. Finally, he attributed this initiative to Father Aparicio, although the latter was in no way involved, and only received a copy almost a year later, at his own request, on August 4, 1941 (VDN, p. 150-152; 179-180).

(984) *Documentos*, p. 431-433; 437-439. The *subtitles* which we add, and the device of different type styles, renders comparison of the two texts easier. In the first version (October 24), *the italics* underline the sentences or paragraphs omitted in the second. And in this final version (of December 2), *the italics* indicate passages added or substituted in a significant manner for the text of the first version. As for the discrepancies in detail, each of the two translations faithfully takes them into account. We give the integral text, respecting the order of each of the two versions.

(985) It suffices to read the rambling, incoherent and confused text which Mother Godinho sent Pope Pius XII in 1954, to grasp the whole distance separating the clear and limpid exposition of the authentic revelations from the clumsy mishmash expressing only subjective and apocryphal reconstructions (cf. *supra*, p. 172-177).

(986) III, p. 107.

(987) MSC, p. 53.

(988) Cf. *supra*, p. 524-525.

(989) MSC, p. 53.

(990) Father Netter, *Fatima Chronik*, p. 41.

(991) Letter of December 1, 1940, Doc., p. 435.

(992) To Father Gonçalves, Doc., p. 425-427.

(993) We follow literally the text of Sister Lucy, which passes naturally from singular to plural, so true is it that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are but one in Their love for us.

(994) Letter to Father Gonçalves, December 1, 1940, Doc., p. 439.

(995) Quoted by Alonso, FER, p. 65.

(996) Let us point out that in 1940, the Spanish government had taken this measure of suppressing the pagan feasts of the Carnival (FER, p. 100-101).

(997) Continuation of the letter of December 1, 1940 to Father Gonçalves, quoted above (Doc., p. 439). As December coincided this year with the first Sunday of Advent, the Divine communication had to have taken place the preceding Thursday, November 28. Another text of Sister Lucy alludes to this same revelation: «I remained in the chapel with Our Lord, until midnight. Our Lord made me experience, etc.» (Doc., p. 467).

(998) Cf. *supra*, “The Carnival of 1918”, p. 78-80.

(999) Let us point out that in the *Documentos* (p. 441-443), Father Martins had quoted this letter according to the copy (no doubt undated) addressed by Lucy to Father Gonçalves. This text (which I quoted in the first edition of this work) presents some variants: the date indicated (January 10, 1941) is the one assigned by Father Gonçalves.

(1000) Here, the copy destined for Father Gonçalves included a paragraph which, unfortunately, did not figure in the text sent to Cardinal Cerejeira: «*Our Lord desires the government to take part in it, at least by abolishing the pagan feasts. But my director thinks that it is better to suppress the cooperation of the government, and that it be done only by Your Eminence and their Excellencies the bishops, as a campaign of prayers and sacrifices. Our Lord will make known His desires to you.*»

(1001) Nov. doc., p. 251-252.

(1002) Nov. doc., p. 249-250.

(1003) She recalls to Father Gonçalves, on the subject of what role the government might take: «I said nothing to the Cardinal, because Your Reverence had indicated to me that it was better not to speak about it. *I do not know if it might be better for Your Reverence to speak about this with His Eminence.* I hope that Our Lord will not fail to inspire His Eminence, and move him to the fulfilment of His desires, out of fear that abandoning His designs might be the cause of more deplorable pains in the nation’s future.» (Nov. doc., p. 252).

(1004) Quoted in *Lumen* 5 (1941), p. 201-217. Excerpts of it are found in FER, p.100, in FCP, p. 82-85, *Cartas*, p. 26-27. Cf. Doc., p. 467.

(1005) III, p. 115. On June 12, 1941, Sister Lucy received from Our Lord a communication for the intention of the bishops of Spain. But as it was not passed

on to them until later on, we shall explain its contents and repercussions in our Vol. III, Chap. I.

(1006) March 19, 1940, Doc., p. 465.

(1007) Quoted by Father Netter, *Fatima Chronik*, p. 40. Cf. Alonso, FER, p. 57-58.

(1008) Quoted by Floridi, *Moscow and the Vatican*, p. 25. Franklin Roosevelt was a Freemason since 1911, and a 32nd degree Mason since 1929 (cf. Georges Ollivier, *F. Roosevelt, l'homme de Yalta*, p. 11, La Librairie Française, 1955). In his person, Masonry once more played into the hands of communism.

(1009) Cf. Msgr. Georges Roche and Ph. Saint-Germain, *Pie XII devant l'Histoire*, p. 485-486; R. Laffont, 1972.

(1010) Ambassador Myron Taylor to Pope Pius XII: «Collaboration with the Anglo-Saxons will introduce religious tolerance into Russia.» (Sept. 22, 1942). Mr. Osborne, a British official, to Cardinal Maglione: «Mr. Eden believes that *the USSR does not seek to Bolshevize Europe, and will respect the rights of nations after the war...* Although it is impossible to foresee the effect of the war's outcome on Russia's political system, we believe it is quite possible that some change of ideas concerning religious and social questions may result from a victorious collaboration of Soviet Russia with Great Britain and the United States. This is equally true for Russia's intentions regarding the countries to be liberated from the German yoke. And it may be added in this connection that the Soviet government *has given no indication that it has the intention of pursuing an active policy of Bolshevization* (sic),» (February 9, 1942). Msgr. G. Roche, *ibid.*, p. 491-498.

(1011) Sister Lucy's letter to Father Aparicio, December 3, 1939, Doc., p. 489.

(1012) Letter to Father Aparicio, September 1, 1940, Doc., p. 493.

(1013) Letter of August 31, 1941. Doc., p. 445.

(1014) III, p. 105.

(1015) August 31, 1941, Doc., p. 445.

(1016) III, p. 115.

(1017) *Ibid.*, p. 117.

(1018) Letter of August 31, 1941, to Father Gonçalves, Doc., p. 445. Cf. III, p. 115.

(1019) In a text of May 13, 1936, intended for Father Gonçalves. Sister Lucy had already written: «During this apparition (of July 13) the Secret was given to us... *preceded by the vision of hell*, which must have caused such an impression on us all, especially Jacinta, whose character was even changed.» (Doc., p. 461; cf. *supra*, p. 40-49.) Similarly, in her letter of May 18, 1941, Sister Lucy,

addressing Father Gonçalves, seems to suppose that he already read the vision of hell (Doc., p. 443).

(1020) III, p. 113.

(1021) Let us also point out a moving coincidence; precisely at the moment when Sister Lucy was writing and commenting on the great Secret, destined to develop devotion to the Immaculate One so wonderfully, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, in conformity with the vision he had had in his childhood, offered his life to preach about the Immaculate One to the most wretched of men, condemned to die of starvation in a Bunker of Auschwitz. From the cell where these poor people were, every day prayers could be heard recited in a loud voice, *the Rosary* and religious chants, in which the prisoners of other cells also joined... The prayers and *chants to the Blessed Virgin* spread all through the underground. Father Maximilian began, and all the others responded...» Testimony of Bruno Borgowiec at the informative process of Warsaw (*Le Messager de saint Antoine*, special issue, “Maximilian Kolbe, a saint for our times”).

(1022) Stanislas Mikolajczyk, former Prime Minister of Poland, *Le viol de la Pologne, un modèle d’aggression soviétique*, chap. IV, Katyn, p. 46, Plon, 1949.

(1023) Read, for example, in Heller and Nekrich, the exposition of the facts, which leaves no doubt remaining about the authors of the crime (“La Tragédie de Katyn”, p. 340-344). Cf. our Vol. III, p. 110-111.

(1024) Cf. Alonso, Introduction to the Fourth Memoir, p. 120.

(1025) IV, p. 121.

(1026) IV, p. 154.

(1027) Father Netter, *Fatima Chronik*, p. 38.

(1028) Quoted by Castelbranco, p. 185.

(1029) *Nouvelle Histoire de l’Église*, p. 606. Seuil, 1975.

(1030) Father Leiber, private secretary of Pius XII for thirty-four years. “Pie XII”, *Documentation catholique*, February 1, 1959, col. 161-174.

(1031) Letter on the occasion of the 7th centennial of the Institution of the Scapular of Carmel, February 11, 1950, *Documents pontificaux*, 1950, p. 35.

(1032) Allocution to the Chapter of Saint Mary Major’s Basilica, December 8, 1939, *Documents pontificaux de S.S. Pie XII*, p. 372-374.

(1033) Private notes of Cardinal Verdier, quoted by Canon Papin, *Le dernier étage du Vatican*, p. 63.

(1034) He also wanted to undertake excavations around Saint Peter’s tomb, and to establish a new translation of the Psalter. Conference of Cardinal Tardini on Pope Pius XII, October 20, 1959 (French language version of *L’Osservatore Romano*, November 6 and 19, 1959).

(1035) Doc. pont., 1939, p. 23.

(1036) Letter to the Secretary of State requesting prayers for peace among peoples, on the occasion of the month of Mary, April 15, 1940 (p. 126). From 1939 to 1944, each year the Pope published a similar letter to prescribe prayers to the Most Holy Virgin to obtain peace.

(1037) Cf. Vol. I, p. 180. Discourse of October 31, 1942.

(1038) Msgr. G. Roche, *Pie XII devant l'histoire*, p. 24-28, Laffont, 1972.

(1039) Discourse to the pilgrims of the Three Venetias, on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the death of Pius X, August 19, 1939, Doc. pont., 1939, p. 230-236.

(1040) Cf. the admirable discourse of beatification, on June 3, 1951, and of canonization, on May 29, 1954.

(1041) Cf. Msgr. G. Roche, *Pie XII devant l'histoire*, Chap. III, "Sous les fusils bolchéviques", p. 33-35.

(1042) Canon Papin, *Le dernier étage du Vatican*, p. 71.

(1043) Doc. pont., 1939, p. 32.

(1044) Doc. pont., 1939, p. 55-58. Cf. May 8, 1939, the "Allocution to the Spanish colony of Rome".

(1045) Doc. pont., 1939, p. 124-125.

(1046) Ibid., p. 397-399.

(1047) Private notes of Cardinal Verdier, quoted by Canon Papin, op. cit., p. 29.

(1048) Cf. Canon Papin, ibid., p. 73-90.

(1049) Doc. pont., 1940, p. 325-327.

(1050) Ibid., p. 150-168. Cf. *supra*, p. 420-422.

(1051) In 1940, the Portuguese overseas empire numbered about ten million souls.

(1052) *Documents pontificaux de S.S. Pie XII*, 1940, p. 200-212.

(1053) The Portuguese bishops were not mistaken, highlighting the event in their collective pastoral letter of February 11, 1942 (cf. Castelbranco, p. 132).

(1054) Cf. *supra*, p. 729. As for the letter to the Holy Father, written in final form by Sister Lucy on December 2, 1940, we had written in the first edition of this work that she had sent it directly to Pius XII by Bishop Costa Nunes. In his last book, Father A.M. Martins tells us that it was sent on to the Holy Father through Msgr. Tardini's mediation (FCM, p. 89).

(1055) *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1941, 14-18, Castelbranco, p. 132.

(1056) Merv. In., p. 9.

(1057) Merv. In., p. 323-324.

(1058) «From May 3 to May 10, 1942, preaching, in the form of a mission, in all the parishes of Portugal. On Sunday, May 10, general communion and

exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament. *On the evening of May 12*, a torchlight pro-cession to the Cova da Iria and in the parishes where it shall be possible. *On May 13*, pontifical Mass celebrated by the Cardinal Patriarch with all the bishops assisting; national consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; solemn prayers for peace and for the Pope.

«There shall be organized, under the control of the ecclesiastical authority and with the participation of the civil authorities, solemn meetings or civic acts to recall the apparitions and to propagate the message of Fatima; there shall also be performed solemn acts of reparation, processions of penance, stations of the cross.

«The association of Crusaders of Fatima shall be developed. The women and young girls are invited to constitute *Modesty Leagues* to react against abuses of fashions, and especially against nudity on the beaches. Heads of families shall engage themselves not to allow the members of their family to frequent the theatres and cinemas which do not respect morals.

«As a tribute of compassion towards the peoples tried by war, Catholics shall deprive themselves once a week or month of some distraction or costly satisfaction, to use the cost in good works. Portuguese Catholics are invited to contribute by their alms to the construction of the Roman church of Saint Eugene, intended to commemorate the episcopal jubilee of Pope Pius XII.» (F. Carret-Petit, *Notre-Dame du Rosaire de Fatima*, p. 156-157, La Bonne Presse, 1943.)

(1059) Merv. In., p. 324-325.

(1060) Merv. In., p. 325-327.

(1061) «Eight kilos (about eighteen pounds) of gold had been collected. The dimensions of the statue allowed the use of only 1,200 grams of gold, 2,650 precious stones of various types, and 313 pearls.»

(1062) Merv. In., p. 327-328.

(1063) Canon Galamba, *Jacinta*, eighth edition, 1982.

(1064) Quoted by A.M. Martins, *O Padre Aparicio e a consagração da Russia e do mundo ao Imaculado Coração de Maria*, p. 754, Broteria, 1967. Without giving the precise date, Father Alonso also alludes to this request of the Portuguese bishops (MSC, p. 54; FER, p. 46). Father Geenen makes it clear that this request was addressed to Rome in October 1942 (*“Les antécédents doctrinaux et historiques de la consécration du monde au Coeur Immaculé de Marie,”* in *Maria, Études sur la Vierge Marie*, Vol. V, p. 869.

(1065) *Rivista diocesana Milanese*, June 1942, p. 143-146.

(1066) Quoted by Alonso, FAE, p. 100-101; Carret-Petit, p. 41.

(1067) HLF, p. 29, and FAE, p. 101.

- (1068) Cf. Alonso, HLF, p. 30-31.
- (1069) P. J. Rolim, *Francisco*, p. 433.
- (1070) Doc. pont., 1942, p. 119-140.
- (1071) Cf. *supra*, p. 681-683.
- (1072) P. M. Pinho, S.J., *Sous le ciel de Balazar, Alexandrine Marie da Costa*, p. 105 (Vitte, Lyon, 1958, 150 pages). Cf. Roger Rebut, *Les messages de la Vierge Marie*, p. 212, Téqui, 1968.
- (1073) Merv. In., p. 5.
- (1074) Ibid., p. 330.
- (1075) The original Portuguese version is quoted by De Marchi, *Era Uma Senhora mais brilhante que o sol*, p. 296-301, “Missoes Consolata”, Fatima, 1966.
- (1076) The subtitles are added by us.
- (1077) Saint Ambrose, *De excessu fratris sui Sat.*, P. I, no. 44.
- (1078) Saint John Chrysostom, Hom. LII in Gen.
- (1079) Camoens, *Lusiades*, chant VII. verses 3 and 14.
- (1080) Saint John Chrysostom, Hom. LII in Gen.
- (1081) Encyclical *Annum Sacrum*, May 25, 1899, Acts of Leo XIII, Vol. VI, p. 33-35.
- (1082) We shall not describe right away the enthusiasm which this magnificent discourse caused in Portugal, nor the many acts by which the Holy Father strove to give it immense repercussions in the entire Church. Since we have chosen to interrupt our present exposition at this decisive date of October 31, 1942, we shall describe them in our next volume.
- (1083) The expression comes from Paul VI in his discourse for the closing of the third session of the Council, when he evoked the memory of this consecration of 1942 (Nov. 21, 1964, Doc. cath., Dec. 6, 1964, col. 1546).
- (1084) Cf. *supra*, p. 533-534.
- (1085) Cf. *supra*, p. 731-732.
- (1086) FAE, p. 111.
- (1087) Cardinal Cerejeira, preface to *Jacinta*, by Canon Galamba, 1946 edition.
- (1088) This appendix and the following ones did not appear in the first edition of this work dated January, 1984. They bring various additional information which constitute a *mise à jour* of the whole of our exposition, taking account of recent studies on Fatima published in Portugal up to October, 1986.
- (1089) *Les voyants de Fatima*, nos. 1-2, 1986, p. 1-3.
- (1090) Cf. *supra*, p. 211-212.
- (1091) Quoted by Alonso, Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 30-31. Let us point out that on

March 1, 1928, in a letter to the Mother General, Mother Magalhaes again explicitly alludes to the apparition of Pontevedra. Speaking of Lucy, she writes: «*I always knew her to be an extraordinary soul, especially for her obedience and simplicity.* It was during her stay at Pontevedra that the house began to recover and make progress. ***There, according to what she told me, Our Lady visited her again,*** but, my Reverend Mother, I desire that you not make this disclosure known. Our Lady has given her very special favours, that is the truth... To live with her gave me much devotion, but I never let it show to her, and I treated her like any other Sister.» (ibid., p. 32.)

(1092) Let us recall that according to the Blessed Virgin's exact request, this quarter of an hour of meditation must be performed outside of the time when the Rosary is recited. Bishop da Silva's interpretation, according to which it suffices to meditate during recitation of the Rosary, is a regrettable dilution of Our Lady's true requirements (cf. *supra*, p.719-721).

(1093) It is clear, according to this letter, that there is no need to express this intention to the confessor, but only to offer God this monthly confession, in the spirit of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Let us also make it clear that the Mass of Saturday evening, even if it is an "anticipated Sunday Mass", can be counted as Mass of the first Saturday of the month.

(1094) Quoted by Alonso (Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 41-42) and recently, by Father Martins (Nov. doc., p. 118-119; and FCM, p. 22-23).

(1095) Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 54. Cf., in the same sense, the letter of December 20, 1928 (op. cit., p. 55); cf. FCM, p. 25-27.

(1096) Eph. Mar., 1973, p. 57. FCM, p. 27-28.

(1097) *Cartas*, p. 19-20. Unfortunately, Father Martins does not indicate the date of this letter.

(1098) Although this promise does not explicitly figure in the seer's writings, many texts guarantee for us that it is indeed in the spirit of Our Lady. Sister Lucy writes, for example, on May 27, 1943, on the subject of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: «The holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary love and desire this cult, because They use it to draw souls to Them, and herein lie all Their desires: *To save souls, many souls, all souls, salvar almas, muitas almas, todas as almas.*» (FCM, p. 62-63; cf. our Vol. III, p. 150.)

(1099) This very detailed account appeared in the monthly review, *Rosas de Santa Teresinha* of March 1930, under the title "Cura inesperada da menina Teresinha do Menino Jesus Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches. Here are some excerpts from it: «Teresinha became ill at Tuy, on January 9, 1928, suffering from a furuncle on the upper lip... On the fifth or sixth day, two abscesses appeared on her back, one on the level of the left kidney, the other

lower, at the level of the loins. The doctors consulted diagnosed this three-year-old child as having a purulent infection with streptococcus. The tumours were very profound, and took time to mature, before they could be lanced. However, the little child, who from the beginning had an intense fever with delirium, now suffered horrible pain. She could rest neither day nor night. Close to five weeks went by this way. Finally the day came when the upper tumour, the most important one, already of considerable size, seemed to present the conditions needed for an operation. The operation, which unfortunately could not be done at a good time, accomplished nothing, for not only did the lower abscess persist, continuing to provoke an intense fever, but the daily treatment of the open abscess was very painful... Two or three days later, the lower tumour began reaching a volume greater than that of the upper tumour, and the swelling spread in the right leg, down to the knee. One can realize our affliction in the face of such a grave complication, and which according to the doctor, could be resolved only in two or three weeks, a period he said was necessary for the new abscess to arrive at maturation.»

(1100) «Now at that moment (continues the Portuguese consul at Vigo), there took place a phenomenon inexplicable for us: **during the night, and contrary to what the doctor foresaw, everything disappeared: the fever, the tumour, the swelling of the leg.** When, in the morning, we saw our daughter, so disfigured and afflicted with fever a few hours before, and now without any trace of the evils which, for three months, had tormented her so, we were really stupefied! Teresinha was already laughing, and said that she wanted to go out, that she was better. The doctor was also completely stupefied. It is because there was another medicine to take care of her: the protection of Our Lady and little Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, for which so many good people prayed. *It is fitting here to give all our thanks to the good Dorothean Sisters. I believe that it was they who obtained everything by their prayers.*»

(1101) Mr. and Mrs. d'Aout, RC. Ramada Curto, 30. 3 Dto 2970-Sesimbra, Portugal.

(1102) Cf. *supra*, p. 524-530.

(1103) This text and Bishop da Silva's response are quoted by Father Pierre Caillon in his conferences on the history of Fatima.

(1104) Undoubtedly the text which Father Gonçalves received the day before, June 12, 1930 (cf. *supra*, p. 528-530).

(1105) *Supra*, p. 524-525.

(1106) Father Gonçalves had thus promised the seer to make a priority of speaking to the Bishop of Leiria.

(1107) Cf. *supra*, p. 531.

- (1108) William Thomas Walsh, *Our Lady of Fatima*, p. 222-223.
- (1109) Cf. *supra*, p. 643.
- (1110) Ibid., p. 643-645.
- (1111) Ibid., p. 633.
- (1112) Letter of May 18, 1936, cf. *supra*, p. 632.
- (1113) In June 1930, cf. *supra*, p. 530-531.
- (1114) Nov. doc., p. 174-175 or FCM, p. 82-83.
- (1115) Cf. letter of May 18, 1936; cf. *supra*, p. 630-632.
- (1116) Nov. doc., p. 175 and FCM, p. 82-83.
- (1117) FCM, p. 34.